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# Response to the Questions on Vietnam Posed in National Security Study Memorandum Number 1



**Secret**

18

7 February 1969
No. 0554/69

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Approved For Release 2006/10/04 : CIA-RDP79B01737A002200010001-5

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
7 February 1969

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Response to the Questions on Vietnam Posed in National Security Study Memorandum No. 1

In National Security Study Memorandum No. 1, dated 21 January, Dr. Kissinger asked the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence to prepare separate responses to twenty-nine questions on Vietnam. This memorandum constitutes the Central Intelligence Agency's response to Dr. Kissinger's 21 January request.

With the two exceptions noted and explained below, we have prepared a separate reply to each of the twenty-nine questions. The numbering and order of the replies follow the numbering system for the questions employed in the attachment to National Security Study Memorandum No. 1. Each reply begins on a new page and is preceded by a restatement of the particular question. This Memorandum can thus be easily broken up into its twenty-seven separate components if that will facilitate the collation and comparison of our responses with those received from the Departments of State and Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Ambassador Bunker, and COMUSMACV.

We have not attempted to reply to Question 24:

*"How do /US/ military deployment and tactics today differ from those of 6-12 months ago? What are reasons for changes and what has this impact been?"*

or to Question 25:

*"In what different ways (including innovations in organization) might US force-levels be reduced to various levels, while minimizing impact on combat capabilities?"*

These two questions relate to the deployment, size, and use of US Forces which are operational matters rather than intelligence questions and, hence, topics to which we could contribute little in the way of useful comment.

* * *

QUESTION I

*Why is the DRV in Paris? What is the evidence? (Among the hypotheses: a. Out of weakness, to accept a face-saving formula for defeat. b. To negotiate the withdrawal of US (and NVA) forces, and/or a compromise political settlement, giving a chance for NLF victory in the South. c. To give the US a face-saving way to withdraw. d. To undermine the GVN and US/GVN relations, and to relieve US military pressure in both North and South Vietnam. e. Out of desire to end the losses and costs of war on the best terms attainable.)*

Hanoi's motives in agreeing to begin discussions with the US last April were probably fairly complex. No single explanation adequately explains its willingness to negotiate under conditions previously rejected. Moreover, its calculations have certainly been reviewed periodically as the talks have proceeded and as the situation in South Vietnam has changed.

Two of the hypotheses, a and c, seem much less plausible as explanations of Hanoi's behavior than the other possible motives.

Hypothesis a.

For several reasons it seems quite unlikely that Hanoi agreed to negotiate primarily because of weakness and to accept a face-saving formula for its defeat. The record of the past year, indeed the fact that a full year has elapsed, does not suggest that Hanoi has felt itself under urgent pressures to end the fighting. Nor is it clear that Hanoi thinks it has been, or soon will be "defeated." It has been willing to delay and procrastinate on each issue. Had Hanoi feared imminent defeat, presumably a cease fire would have been one of its immediate aims. But this is not the case--a cease fire is probably low

on Hanoi's agenda. Finally, the weakening of the NVA/VC military effort is a cumulative process. There may come a time when Hanoi clearly perceives that its forces will pass a point of no return, but this certainly does not seem to be the case at present. Current evidence suggests that NVA forces, in fact, are attempting to improve their posture by new inputs of replacements and preparations for limited "offensives."

Hypothesis c.

Similarly, hypothesis "c" should be virtually ruled out. There may have been a moment of euphoria last spring when Hanoi concluded from President Johnson's 31 March statements and subsequent events that the US has at long last "recognized" the hopelessness of its situation. No doubt Hanoi still believes this line to some extent, i.e., that domestic political pressures impose serious constraints on US governmental policies and are eroding US determination (or ability) to persist in the struggle. Events since March 1968, however, must have dissipated much of Hanoi's optimism and, at a minimum, convinced its leaders that the US is not seeking to save face.

* * *

Some combination of the remaining hypotheses seems to provide a more plausible comprehensive rationale for Hanoi's conduct of the negotiations and its general military-political strategy.

Hypothesis "d" reflects a continuing North Vietnamese objective. The Paris forum is an ideal sounding board for incessant propaganda plus diplomatic maneuvers to weaken the alliance between Washington and Saigon. Whatever else may be attempted, this will remain an important aspect of the Paris talks. And, of course, Hanoi has relieved the pressures of bombing. There is no doubt that this was its initial objective in Paris, and it persisted for six months to achieve it. Having done so, Hanoi probably now calculates that continuation of the Paris talks inhibits the US from resuming bombing of North Vietnam.

If this was all Hanoi intended for the Paris negotiations, then nothing much more will happen. But in our view, Hanoi has further objectives to pursue and hence will not treat the Paris talks as nothing but a convenient vehicle for waging psychological warfare against the Saigon-Washington relationship, though Hanoi will of course continue to wage such warfare, whatever else it may also do.

Hypothesis "b" is a concise summary of what Hanoi probably now regards as an acceptable outcome in Paris, even though it may still have hopes for obtaining more. There is little doubt that Hanoi wants the US to withdraw all its forces; the real question is whether Hanoi expects to negotiate this withdrawal, bargain over the terms, or participate in a tacit arrangement in which both sides begin to de-escalate. We think the evidence suggests Hanoi's hopes to commit the US to a clearly defined withdrawal, while Hanoi gradually reduces its forces with no open commitment to do so, somewhat in the manner of the resolution of the bombing question.

Whatever the approach to troop withdrawal, in Hanoi's view that issue is virtually inseparable from Hanoi's other principal demand--for a "political solution" to the Vietnam war. We interpret this to mean <u>at least</u> some restructuring of the political order in the South, so that the NLF is guaranteed a legal status, is free to operate politically, and perhaps retains some control or autonomy in clearly defined areas: in other words, a viable base of power from which it can compete in a political struggle after the fighting ends. Some recent pieces of evidence suggest that Hanoi may be prepared to go quite far in accepting the constitutional and administrative structure of the GVN, but an agreement that does not meet the position outlined above would almost certainly be rejected. Furthermore, Hanoi is certain to continue its evolving propaganda and political action campaign keyed to the "necessity" for top level personnel changes in the Saigon government--a "peace cabinet"--if there is to be any real progress toward a negotiated settlement. New and malleable faces at Saigon's top level would of course enhance Hanoi's willingness to countenance at least a temporary continuation of the GVN's present constitutional and administrative structure.

This explanation, which we feel is the most likely of all, does not preclude hypothesis "e." Indeed, Hanoi's desire to cut its losses and negotiate seriously with the US is an underlying motive for its probable willingness to accept an outcome far less than it currently demands, or believed likely some years back. Hanoi has almost certainly gone through the calculations of its losses, costs and risks, and compared them with potential gains from different military modes and bargaining positions. This hypothesis implies, however, that ultimately Hanoi will have to accept whatever the US and Saigon offer. It is not inconceivable that the situation will reach this point, if current trends are sustained. But this is a long process and Hanoi currently seems to have adopted measures to maintain its military position in the south against a rapid deterioration. In sum, Hanoi probably believes it can persist long enough and effectively enough so that the compromise outlined in hypothesis "b" becomes increasingly attractive and acceptable to the US.

The evidence for the preceding judgments is drawn from a wide number of sources: reporting from the negotiations themselves, [redacted] 25X1 25X1 25X1 [redacted] from the public record, and from military information as it relates to Hanoi's general strategy. Fundamentally, however, the defense of one hypothesis or another is a matter of analytical judgment, rather than a preference for a single source or body of information.

QUESTION II

*What is the nature of evidence, and how adequate is it, underlying competing views (as in the most recent NIE on this subject, with its dissenting footnotes) of the impact of various outcomes in Vietnam within Southeast Asia?*

The evidence can be broken down into three categories of information:

(1) the probable reactions of leaders in the non-Communist states of the region to various outcomes in Vietnam;

(2) the strengths and weaknesses of various opposition groups within those states;

(3) the vulnerabilities of the various governments to insurgency or other forms of subversion.

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[redacted]

In general, this evidence provides an adequate basis for informed judgments about the impact of various outcomes in Vietnam on these states. Though our knowledge varies from country to country, it is generally substantial and reliable for the states with which the US has close relations (Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines). On the other non-Communist states, evidence is relatively sparse, though this is less true of Cambodia than of Burma.

The divergent views expressed in the NIE do not stem from conflicts over evidence per se but rather from basic differences of judgment about the character and policies of the various states--Thailand, in particular--and about the importance of factors other than the outcome in Vietnam to their reactions.

The principal other factors are:

(1) the behavior of Hanoi and Peking after the settlement;

(2) the posture which the US assumes in the region after the settlement; and particularly

(3) the impressions which Southeast Asian leaders (Communist and non-Communist alike) form of the likely future course of US policy.

The dissenters from the estimate took the view that, in the event of a settlement that permits a Communist take-over in South Vietnam within one or two years, there would be relatively little that the US could do to reassure Thailand and, some believed, other non-Communist states that it would honor its commitments in the region. The supporters of the text, on the other hand, argued that the states outside of Indochina would wait to see what the US might do--particularly with regard to Thailand--before moving toward some kind of accommodation with Peking and/or Hanoi.

QUESTION III

*How soundly-based is the common belief that Hanoi is under active pressure with respect to the Paris negotiations from Moscow (for) and Peking (against)? Is it clear that either Moscow or Peking believe they have, or are willing to use, significant leverage on Hanoi's policies? What is the nature of evidence, other than public or private official statements?*

The key words in this question are "active pressure." If this means positive action, such as withholding assistance, diplomatic demarches, heated arguments and acrimonious debates etc., then the evidence definitely does not support a contention that either Moscow or Peking engages in this sort of pressure. What is clear, however, is that Moscow and Peking do have opposing views on the value of the Paris negotiations and probably on how Hanoi should conduct them. Peking opposes the fact of negotiation at this time and insists that Hanoi must persevere in "protracted war." Moscow is much more flexible and probably prefers an early political settlement of the war as favorable as possible to Hanoi, but through negotiations. These positions emerge from the public record--i.e., official statements and the way in which Moscow and Peking portray events in Paris. Presumably there are attempts to influence Hanoi, but through persuasion rather than aggressive pressures.

Moscow's position is a special one, since its officials are apparently in close contact with the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris. The Soviets seem well informed of even the private conversations and the day to day maneuvering. On occasion they have taken a direct hand, although when they do they are presumably acting with Hanoi's foreknowledge and approval. There is some reason to believe, however, that the Soviets

sometimes interpret their role rather freely and may have gone beyond what Hanoi asked for or anticipated. We cannot be sure on this aspect.

In any case, the thrust of Soviet actions is toward breaking stalemates, suggesting alternatives and otherwise moving the negotiations along. Peking is apparently not similarly involved, though there is very little information on Sino-Vietnamese relations in Paris or elsewhere. The main barometer of these relations is the tone and content of Chinese propaganda.

Both Moscow and Peking could exercise important leverage. Soviet aid is increasingly important, especially since Hanoi is making some preparations for post-war economic recovery. Peking also provides vital military assistance, some manpower in the north, and controls the overland routes to North Vietnam. Both powers could theoretically influence Hanoi's course. But the reality is that in competing for influence they tend to cancel out each other; in fact, this competition probably inhibits any major effort to put pressure on Hanoi in this manner. Peking also has a further problem in the fact that its desire to have Hanoi continue the war reduces the practical utility of any Chinese threats to curtail support which enables Hanoi to carry on the struggle.

China has harassed the delivery of Soviet goods in the past and actually delayed or stopped some shipments, but not to the point of doing any significant damage to Hanoi's war effort. (Some of the disruption in any case was the result of the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.) Moreover, since late 1967 Hanoi has taken a direct role in the handling of Soviet aid through China.

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Also numerous Soviet officials in the past have complained privately about Chinese harassment of Soviet deliveries.

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In 1966 there was some evidence from documents captured in South Vietnam explaining to the Communist rank and file the differing positions of the USSR and China. The documents made it clear that at that time Hanoi had rejected both views and was charting its own course. In our view this is still the case: Hanoi has been extremely skillful in playing the Soviets against the Chinese, compelling both sides to provide assistance largely on Hanoi's terms, and to concede Hanoi's right to an independent course. Nevertheless, Hanoi's tendency in the last year has been in the Soviet rather than the Chinese direction; this was quite evident in Hanoi's prompt and unequivocal support of the Soviet position in Czechoslovakia. For its part, China seems to be fighting a rear guard action, retreating grudgingly from its adamant opposition to the Paris talks.

QUESTION IV

*How sound is our knowledge of the existence and significance of stable "Moscow" and "Peking" factions within the Hanoi leadership, as distinct, for example, from shifting factions, all of whom recognize the need to balance off both allies? How much do we know, in general, of intraparty disputes and personalities within Hanoi?*

Our insights into the inner workings of the North Vietnamese Politburo come almost exclusively from analysis of open source material such as writings, public statements and patterns of appearance by the Politburo members. Some information is acquired through captured documents, but this is generally only supplementary to the open source material.

There is also a great quantity of speculative analysis and guesswork on the Politburo's inner workings, and factional rivalries, produced by diplomats, journalists, and visitors to North Vietnam of various nationalities and widely varying political outlooks. Much of this material is openly published; [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] This mountain of speculation sometimes produces intriguing hypotheses, but it adds little to our slim base of hard data.

Assessing just where an individual Politburo member stands on any particular issue at any particular time is extremely difficult. We believe, however, that a fairly accurate picture of the attitudes of many Politburo members toward specific policy issues can be sketched by using the analytic tools of the intelligence trade.

In our view, for example, the Politburo is not split into solid factions which can be labeled pro-Soviet or pro-Peking. Hanoi's attitude toward both China and the USSR has shifted considerably over the

last five years, depending almost entirely on the level of support given by each to the particular policy line being taken by Hanoi on the war. In 1963 and 1964, for example, Hanoi was anti-Khrushchev and pro-Peking because Peking gave greater support to Hanoi's war policy than did Moscow. Hanoi shifted to a more neutral position in 1965 when the post-Khrushchev leadership in Moscow began to offer more military aid to North Vietnam. Today, when Moscow is clearly backing Hanoi's decision to sit down and talk about ending the war, while Peking opposes such a policy, North Vietnamese - Soviet relations are quite warm.

All these shifts have been accomplished by the same members of the Politburo, suggesting that a majority, at least, view relations with Moscow and Peking primarily from the perspective of North Vietnam's interests. We are not aware that any member of the Politburo is rigidly locked into a pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese position, with the possible exception of the party's China specialist, Hoang Van Hoan. Nevertheless, certain Politburo members often take a line on the war which is more militant and therefore closer to Peking's view while others tend to take a more flexible attitude which makes them more likely to look toward Moscow for help.

Open source material also strongly suggests that there has been an on-going debate, if not dispute, within the Communist Party hierarchy over just how the war ought to be fought at any particular time. We have been able to place the late General Nguyen Chi Thanh (COSVN director at the time of his death), Party First Secretary Le Duan, Politburo member Hoang Van Hoan, Organization Department Chairman Le Duc Tho (the head of Hanoi's Paris delegation), probably Pham Hung (Thanh's replacement as the overall field director in South Vietnam) and several high ranking members of the military establishment on the side which generally pushes for more, faster, and larger-scale military action. On the other side

we can put Pham Van Dong, Truong Chinh and Vo Nguyen Giap as more inclined toward a protracted, guerrilla war with heavy emphasis on political action in the South and diplomatic action as well.

There seems to be some shifting back and forth from time to time on various points, however, and all Politburo members appear to agree on certain general goals. Thus far, their differences do not seem to have been sufficient to result in a paralysis of decision making.

As for their personalities, little is known about most of them and what is known of the rest, such as Pham Van Dong, Vo Nguyen Giap, or Ho Chi Minh, provides no real basis for judging the degree of personal animosities which may exist. While there are clearly differences within the Politburo, we cannot identify any definitely polarized groupings at this time.

QUESTION V

*What is the evidence supporting various hypotheses, and the overall adequacy of evidence, relating to the following questions:*

*a. Why did NVA units leave South Vietnam last summer and fall?*

There is ample evidence that Communist units took such heavy casualties in the first two major offensives of 1968, Tet and May, as to require a substantial period for rest and replacement. Numerous prisoners also testify to the increased pressure felt by Communist units because of allied sweep operations and B-52 strikes.

It is also true, however, that some units which took fairly heavy casualties in the Tet and May offensives did not pull out until the late summer and early fall. Other major units, from the DMZ area and coastal II Corps, withdrew to sanctuaries early in the summer and remained out of action throughout the rest of 1968. These developments suggest that other factors, such as a desire to influence the US to end the bombing completely and move on to substantive talks also entered the equation.

On balance, we believe a pull back of some forces was dictated by a combination of military and political factors. In some areas (especially II and III Corps), a political virtue was probably made out of military necessity. Nonetheless, the number of units involved (particularly in the DMZ and in northern I Corps) and the timing of their withdrawal were probably intended to encourage the US to move forward at Paris on the bombing suspension issue.

*b. Did the predicted "third-wave offensive" by the NVA/VC actually take place? If so, why did it not achieve greater success?*

There are a number of captured documents as well as information from prisoners of war [redacted] confirming that the August-September "third offensive" actually took place, with minimal success. These sources make it clear that even though the Communists had scaled down their aims for this offensive, it was considered to be a failure by the high command. 25X1

The documents attribute the Communist failure primarily to Communist shortcomings whereas prisoners generally state that their units could not carry out their orders because of US spoiling actions. Sources during the summer also suggested that some enemy field unit commanders were demoralized after the May offensive, due to the heavy casualties and lack of tangible success. This factor may partially explain the relative caution used by the enemy during the August-September attacks.

c. *Why are VC guerrillas and local forces now relatively dormant?*

*(Among the hypotheses: 1) response to VC/NVA battle losses, forcing withdrawal or passivity; 2) to put diplomatic pressure on US to move to substantive talks in Paris; 3) to prepare for future operations; and/or 4) pressure of US and Allied operations.)*

Communist military activity across the board has been down since September but VC guerrillas and local forces have become fairly active since at least November. Guerrilla action is by its very nature hard to measure but VC local forces have been bearing the brunt of many recent clashes. This is due in some degree to the fact that the main forces have been away from the battlefield, thus putting more of the burden for fighting on the local forces.

QUESTION VI

*What rate of NVA/VC attrition would outrun their ability to replenish by infiltration and recruitment, as currently calculated? Do present operations achieve this? If not, what force levels and other conditions would be necessary? Is there any evidence they are concerned about continuing heavy losses?*

Estimating the enemy's manpower balance is beset with innumerable pitfalls because of the several quantitative series that must be constructed on the basis of extremely soft and erratic data. We believe that the margin of error in such estimates is such that they are adequate to judge general trends and capabilities, but we would issue a strong caveat against expecting any estimate to yield even a close balancing of gross manpower inputs and attrition. Our analysis of developments in 1968 would indicate that the Communists' gross manpower inputs (infiltration and recruitment) exceeded the attrition of their forces as measured by MACV, although the attrition figures based on KIA data probably understate the true magnitude of enemy losses.

Our estimates of infiltration and recruitment indicate that the Communists may have provided as many as 350,000 persons to maintain and expand somewhat their insurgency base in South Vietnam during 1968. This total includes an estimated number of at least 250,000 through infiltration and about 100,000 by means of recruitment.

This extremely high rate of infiltration could not be kept up indefinitely, and would certainly impose strains on the North Vietnamese populace. However, our estimates of the North Vietnamese manpower base, and the fact that considerable manpower has been released because of the bombing halt, make

it clear that the 1968 rate can certainly be maintained through 1969. The principal determinant of the enemy's willingness to pay such a high price in manpower is probably his judgment of the likelihood of attaining his goals in South Vietnam rather than the mere numbers involved. We are less certain about the enemy's ability to maintain recruitment during 1969 at the 100,000 level. Our estimates reflected both the effects of the Tet offensive and an expansion of the enemy's influence in rural areas. Our annual estimate for 1968 masks a sharp decline in the enemy's recruitment capabilities during the second half of 1968, a period when his presence in the countryside declined notably. If recruitment is to regain the higher levels of the first half of 1968 the enemy would have to raise his level of aggressive activity substantially in order to regain his influence in rural areas.

The number of males fit for military service reaching draft age each year in North Vietnam is currently about 120,000. Although large numbers of infiltrators have been outside this age group, only in 1968 did the requirement for troops exceed the size of the annual draft class. We estimate that North Vietnam also has a civilian manpower pool of at least 600,000 physically fit males in the 18-30 group out of the 10.5 million people in the 15-64 age group.

Although providing an acceptable level of training for 250,000 infiltrators would pose difficult problems for Hanoi, we believe these problems could be handled in much the same way they were during 1968--i.e., by sacrificing quality for quantity. Some draftees did not receive a full cycle of basic or infiltration training, and reservists who make up the majority of many infiltration groups did not receive additional training after being called up. Further, some degradation of cadre quality and regenerative potential was considered acceptable.

Given the force structure and strength we estimate for the NVA in North Vietnam, we do not believe the NVA training capability was seriously eroded during 1968, despite the unprecedented manpower drain.

It is impossible to forecast accurately what force levels the Communists would be able to achieve in South Vietnam by year-end 1969 if they seek to maximize their force inputs. If their plans call for repeated massive offensives such as were staged during the first half of 1968, their forces would not be likely to grow by more than the 20,000-25,000 increment achieved during 1968. On the other hand, if they choose to pursue a more modest offensive posture, their force levels could grow by larger amounts, or the requirement for infiltration and recruitment manpower could be reduced.

Whatever strategy the Communists select, estimating the number of additional allied troops necessary to offset any given enemy manpower gain requires the assumption that allied forces are able to control or at least greatly influence the enemy's casualty rate. We do not believe this assumption to be correct, and discuss it in detail in our response to Question VII.

QUESTION VII

*To what relative extent do the US/RVNAF and the NVA/VC share in the control and the rate of VC/NVA attrition; i.e., to what extent, in terms of our tactical experience, can heavy losses persistently be imposed on VC/NVA forces, despite their possible intention to limit casualties by avoiding contact?*

The Communists have a surprisingly large amount of flexibility in controlling their rate of casualties in South Vietnam. This flexibility is reflected in 1968 killed-in-action statistics -- during February, at the height of the Tet offensive, VC/NVA KIA totaled nearly 40,000, but only five months later during July, the Communists were able to hold their monthly combat deaths to less than 7,000. During the last three months of 1968, average VC/NVA monthly killed-in-action was substantially below 10,000 per month.

The Communists have been able to control their attrition rate by varying both tactics and strategy. Given any current strategic deployment and short term goals, both offensive and defensive tactics may be more or less aggressive. In turn, strategic deployment and degree of offensive or defensive posture will greatly determine loss rates. These variations are obviously not mutually exclusive and tactical aggressiveness largely depends on short and intermediate term strategic goals.

Data on Allied military operations reflect the difficulty of making contact with VC/NVA forces. These data do not indicate which side is able to initiate the contact, only that Allied units were on offensive operations.

Allied Battalion-Size and Larger Operations
(In Battalion Days)

| | Battalion Days of Operations | Battalion Days of Operations With Enemy Contact | Contact Rate (Percent) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1967 | | | |
| US Forces | 28,215 | 5,042 | 18 |
| RVN Forces | 33,466 | 2,452 | 7 |
| Third Nation | 2,342 | 444 | 19 |
| Total | 64,023 | 7,938 | 12 |
| 1968 | | | |
| US Forces | 52,793 | 6,100 | 12 |
| RVN Forces | 32,794 | 3,612 | 11 |
| Third Nation | 2,323 | 421 | 18 |
| Total | 87,910 | 10,133 | 12 |

During both 1967 and 1968, only 12 percent of Allied battalion days resulted in contact. The contact rate for RVN forces increased somewhat -- 7 to 11 percent -- while battalion days remained roughly constant. The data for US forces seem to illustrate the marginal efficiency of increasing operations. US commanders were able to increase their battalion days of operations by 87 percent during 1968, but the number of battalion days with contact increased only 21 percent. Less than one percent of the nearly 2 million reported small unit operations in each year resulted in contact.

Only one-tenth of one percent of ARVN small unit operations resulted in contact during 1968.

In order to quantify the relative influence of Allied and Communist forces over their own casualty rates, and those of the other side, the following relationships have been examined:

Allied Battalion Days of Operation and Enemy KIA

Allied Battalion Days of Operation and Allied KIA

Enemy Attacks and Enemy KIA

Enemy Attacks and Allied KIA

Correlation and regression analysis has been performed on these four sets of variables to determine to what degree variations in one can be explained by variations in the other. For example, if allied forces hold the initiative in setting the pace of enemy casualties as well as controlling their own casualties, there should be a high correlation (a strong relationship) between allied battalion days of operation and both enemy and allied KIA. Conversely, if the enemy holds the initiative in controlling the rate of his own and allied casualties, then there should be a high correlation between enemy attacks and enemy as well as allied KIA. Likewise, if the allies control the rate of casualties, a change in allied battalion days of operation should cause a proportional change in enemy KIA and allied KIA. On the other hand, if the enemy has control over the casualty rate, a change in enemy attacks should cause a corresponding change in allied KIA and enemy KIA.

Monthly data for 1966, 1967, and 1968 supports the latter case -- that the VC/NVA forces are far more influential in establishing the casualty rate than are the allies. Data for the last 6 months of

1968 suggest that the Communists may have lost some of their control over the rate of allied casualties, but have increased control over their own casualties.

| Variables | Correlation (r) | Coefficient of Determination ($r^2$) |
|---|---|---|
| Enemy Attacks and Enemy KIA | .84 | .70 |
| Enemy Attacks and Allied KIA | .90 | .81 |
| Allied Battalion Days and Allied KIA | .45 | .20 |
| Allied Battalion Days and Enemy KIA | .44 | .20 |

Enemy attacks are strongly correlated with enemy KIA and allied KIA; fluctuations in enemy attacks explain 70 percent of the changes in enemy KIA and 81 percent of the changes in allied KIA. On the other hand, allied battalion days of operation are poorly correlated with allied and enemy KIA; the corresponding coefficients of determination suggest that variations in allied battalion days do little to explain changes in allied and enemy KIA.

Considerable care should be taken in interpreting the results of this correlation and regression analysis. Allied battalion days of operation are not the only causative factor in determining enemy casualties -- allied air strikes, artillery, and small unit actions are among other causative factors not considered here. Also, data on enemy attacks and KIA is of somewhat questionable validity.

It does seem clear, however, both from this correlation and regression analysis and the low percentage of contacts among allied operations that the Communists have a remarkable degree of control over their

own and allied casualties, and allied forces are able to exercise only marginal control over enemy casualties. Of course, this control exists between certain limits. Given the current level of allied operations, the Communists would find it difficult to reduce their casualties below some 5,000-7,000 KIA per month and maintain a minimum credible threat. Holding to this rate would probably entail a significant erosion of their authority in rural areas as well as the abandonment of a significant threat to urban areas. Given their probable current view of their overall military/political strategic position, they will probably not be willing to opt for a military posture that will allow them to keep casualties below a minimum monthly average of about 10,000 KIA during the next few months.

QUESTION VIII

*What controversies persist on the estimate of VC Order of Battle, in particular, on the various categories of guerrilla forces and infrastructure? On VC recruiting, and manpower pool? What is the evidence for different estimates, and what is the overall adequacy of evidence?*

Strength Estimates

Estimates of VC/NVA Order of Battle as well as estimates of various categories of guerrillas, irregular forces, and infrastructure have been under thorough review and discussion by members of the intelligence community and CINCPAC/MACV since the summer of 1967. An apparent agreement reached at a conference in Saigon in September 1967 proved to be short-lived. Therefore, the Director of Central Intelligence convened a second conference in Washington in April 1968. This conference included representation from all concerned USIB agencies, CINCPAC, and MACV, and observers from the military services. The Washington conference failed to reach agreement on any of the elements included in the estimates of enemy strength.

Since April 1968, at the direction of the Director of Central Intelligence and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, a CIA/DIA Working Group has worked to reach agreement in Washington and with CINCPAC/MACV. This CIA/DIA group has reached Washington working-level agreement on the strength of those elements composing the military threat (Main and Local Forces, Administrative Services, and Guerrillas) as of the end of August 1968 and for 31 December 1968. In addition, the working group has reached agreement on end-of-the-year

estimates for such irregular organizations as Self Defense Forces and Assault Youth, and for the Political Infrastructure.

The agreed CIA/DIA estimates for 31 December 1968 are as follows:

| Military Threat | In Thousands |
|---|---|
| Combat Forces | |
| NVA | 105-125* |
| VC MF/LF | 45- 55 |
| Subtotal | 150-180* |
| Administrative Services | |
| NVA | 10- 20 |
| VC | 45- 55 |
| Subtotal | 55- 75 |
| Guerrillas | 60-100** |
| Total Military Threat | 265-355 |

* *An estimated 20,000-25,000 of these NVA troops are serving in VC units. This estimate excludes an estimated 28,000 NVA troops deployed north of the DMZ which include but are not limited to the 304th NVA Div., 320th NVA Div., 88th NVA Regt. of the 308th NVA Div., and 102nd NVA Regt. of the 308th NVA Div.*

** *We believe that the military threat represented by the Guerrilla forces is not on a parity with that of the Main and Local Forces because probably only about one-third of the Guerrillas are well armed, trained, and organized.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Other Irregular Organizations | |
| Self Defense Forces | 80-120 |
| Assault Youth | 10- 20 |
| Total | 90-140 |
| Political Infrastructure | 80-100 |

All of these agreed estimates have been communicated to CINCPAC and MACV. There has been some slight narrowing of the differences between the headquarters and field estimates, particularly in the estimates for combat forces, but neither CINCPAC nor MACV has been able to concur in these Washington figures.

## Differences in Estimates

### Military Threat

The "military threat" component of the estimate includes NVA and VC Main and Local Forces, Administrative Services, and Guerrillas. The information available to CIA indicates that the current CINCPAC/MACV estimate of the military threat as of 31 December 1968 is as follows:

| Combat Forces | In Thousands |
|---|---|
| NVA | 106 |
| VC MF/LF | 36- 40 |
| Subtotal | 142-146 |
| Administrative Services | 42 |
| Guerrillas | 59 |
| Total Military Threat | 243-247 |

Although we do not have the detailed data underlying this estimate, it can, on the basis of our knowledge of previous estimates, be made reasonable comparable to the CIA/DIA estimate by making two adjustments:

a. The latest information available to CIA indicated that CINCPAC/MACV judged that some 5,000 NVA troops serve in Administrative Service units.

b. The CINCPAC/MACV estimate of 106,000 NVA troops apparently includes some elements which are excluded from the CIA/DIA estimate because they are north of the DMZ. If these units were excluded from the CINCPAC/MACV figure, then the CINCPAC/MACV figure comparable to the CIA/DIA figure for NVA troops would be 92,000.

With these changes the CIA/DIA and CINCPAC/MACV estimates of the military threat would compare as follows:

| | In Thousands | |
|---|---|---|
| Combat Forces | DIA/CIA | CINCPAC/MACV |
| NVA* | 105-125 | 92 |
| VC MF/LF | 45- 55 | 36- 40 |
| Subtotal | 150-180 | 128-132 |

* *Both sets of NVA figures exclude an estimated 28,000 North Vietnamese Army troops deployed north of the DMZ. They include 20,000-25,000 NVA troops serving in VC MF/LF units.*

| Administrative Services | In Thousands DIA/CIA | CINCPAC/MACV |
|---|---|---|
| NVA | 10- 20 | 5 |
| VC | 45- 55 | 37 |
| Subtotal | 55- 75 | 42 |
| Guerrillas | 60-100 | 59 |
| Total | 265-355 | 229-233 |

The significance of these differences, particularly their military strategic implications, depends, of course, on whether the true military threat is closer to the lower or the higher end of the range estimated by CIA/DIA. The difference in estimates may become of major political importance if developments in Paris should lead to an agreement on the phased withdrawal of NVA troops which intelligence might be required to confirm or monitor. For example, the CIA/DIA estimate is that there were 115,000-145,000 NVA troops in South Vietnam at the end of 1968. This is about 20,000-50,000 troops greater than the CINCPAC/MACV estimate of the NVA presence on 31 December 1968. Moreover, the differing estimates of guerrilla strength would have an important bearing on any estimate of the residual military capabilities of VC forces should the NVA in fact be withdrawn.

Other Irregular Forces

The agreed CIA/DIA estimates include estimates of other irregular forces -- Self Defense Forces and Assault Youth. CINCPAC/MACV refuse to estimate these groups on the ground that they cannot be quantified and are not part of the military threat. We agree that these forces are not of the same military significance as combat and support troops, or guerrillas, and do not group them as part of the military threat, particularly since they are even less well armed or

trained than the guerrillas. Nevertheless, they do perform important military support functions, inflict and receive casualties, and are meaningful elements of the enemy's organized resistance. Therefore, we believe that they can and should be quantified as part of the intelligence necessary for national level assessments of the war in the total context of its political, security, and military evolution.

Political Infrastructure

The CIA/DIA estimate of a Political Infrastructure of 80,000-100,000 is not far out of line with the CINCPAC/MACV estimate of about 82,000. The main difference is that the Washington estimate includes staff and support types not counted by CINCPAC and MACV.

Reasons for the Different Estimates

The principal difference between CIA and MACV over the size of the several elements of Communist forces has been and continues to be the methods used to count them. In some areas, definitional problems also result in differences. For all echelons of the military threat, MACV compiles an OB, unit by unit, applying rigid acceptance criteria to evidence. Further, in compiling its OB, MACV uses only CONFIDENTIAL-level documents and prisoner interrogations. As a result, the OB tends to understate enemy strengths and to lag significantly behind events. Utilizing all-source intelligence, we have developed varying methodologies that provide us with more current estimates of enemy strengths.

For example, at the Local Force level, we have added to the MACV OB 5,000-10,000 soldiers subordinate to districts and provinces. In doing this we have assumed the existence of units for which there is good indirect or inferential evidence. Most of these personnel are in small

Local Force units commonly found at these levels. MACV does not carry such units unless it has direct documentary evidence for each one, even though they are standard in the enemy structure. Likewise, we estimate that some 10,000-20,000 soldiers, belonging to service and support units and staffs subordinate to divisions and regiments, need to be added to the MACV OB. This range is based on studies of the average structure and strength of these elements. The MACV OB criteria requires that each support element be individually confirmed.

The range of our estimate for Political Infrastructure reflects the fact that MACV's estimate excludes many thousands of low-level support personnel who are an integral part of the infrastructure. Our disagreement with MACV in this category arises not so much from differences over evidence but differences over criteria as to who should be counted. The basic problem in estimating the size of the infrastructure, therefore, is that the intelligence community has never come to a firm agreement on what constitutes an infrastructure member. Given the present definition, one could come up with a number ranging anywhere from a few thousand to a figure far in excess of any of the current estimates.

Statement of Methodology and Confidence

Although we are unable to compute statistical measures of confidence for our estimates, we have varying degrees of confidence in them as reflected by the spreads in the ranges of our estimates.

We are most confident of our estimate of the over-all strength of the Main and Local Force structure. This estimate has been approached with three different methodologies, each of which provides answers within the estimative range. Each methodology involves the application of all-source intelligence to correct the deficiencies

of the MACV CONFIDENTIAL-level order of battle. CIA has used a methodology which (1) to fill out the basic force structure, adds units not carried in the MACV OB and (2) adds manpower to the structure based on dynamic studies of average unit strengths. DIA has used a study based on manpower flows (gains and losses) and in addition has recently completed an independent construction of the entire OB from primary source materials.

The CIA estimate of Administrative Service troops is based on ratios developed from primary source materials that relate combat troop strength to support troop strength. Both the CIA study and a recently completed DIA reconstruction of the Administrative Services OB point to the high side of the estimative range presented here.

As the size of the range used for Guerrillas suggests, we are much less certain of the strength of these elements. The low side of the range is based on MACV estimates. The high side of the range is a result of conservative extrapolation from figures in VC documents that gave nationwide irregular strength figures for earlier periods; we have also used more recent VC documents that provided guerrilla strengths for certain provinces. As a rough check we have related these estimates to current HES population control data and inferred that the ability of the VC to organize guerrillas has diminished during 1968.

Our range for Self Defense forces is based on the same type of methodology used for the Guerrilla estimate. Our Assault Youth estimate is based on a small sample of unit strength reports. These estimates provide only a rough order of magnitude for these elements. Our estimate of the Political Infrastructure is based on the MACV estimate,

adjusted to include staff and support personnel that we believe should be included.

Recruitment and the Manpower Pool

We have recently completed a preliminary study which concluded that the Viet Cong recruited an estimated average of 8,500 men per month for their combat units during 1966, and 7,500 men per month during 1967. These estimates are based on information in captured Viet Cong documents, interrogations of prisoners, [redacted] providing data on recruitment in areas including 30 to 40 percent of South Vietnam's hamlet population. This information -- actually enemy reports of the numbers of people recruited in Viet Cong district or larger political subdivisions -- was then related to population security data by geographic areas and the results projected for the remaining areas of South Vietnam. 25X1C

Limited data in captured documents on recruitment activities during 1968 indicates that recruitment spurted to a level at least double the average 1967 rate during the first quarter of the year. This large increase is due largely to organizational improvements in preparation for the Tet offensive and easy access to an expanded recruitment base in rural areas after the offensive. During the second quarter, HES officials reported improvements in rural security, and captured documents indicate that Viet Cong recruitment began to fall off. On the basis of this admittedly tenuous evidence, it would appear that second quarter recruitment probably dropped back to the 1967 average of 7,500 per month, or even slightly lower. These trends have continued through the third and fourth quarters, probably with even sharper declines. Nevertheless, we judge recruitment still to be at a level higher than that estimated by MACV.

These estimates are substantially above those in use by MACV. Although there have been frequent changes, our understanding of MACV recruitment estimates is as follows:

| | Monthly Recruitment |
|---|---|
| 1966 | 7,000 |
| 1967 | 3,500 |
| January-April 1968 | 7,000 |
| May-June | 5,000 |
| July-September | 3,000 |
| October-December | 3,500 |

Determination of the size of the manpower pool available to the Viet Cong and the GVN is an especially vexing analytical problem. The "available pool" is a relatively small residual remaining after the deduction of estimates of the numbers of people not of prime military age, females, the physically unfit, and various estimates of population control and access. Consequently, estimates of the size of the pool are acutely sensitive to a number of necessary assumptions. For example, reasonable estimates of the share of draft age males in South Vietnam who are not physically fit for military duty range from 25 to 40 percent. With this uncertainty alone, estimates of the size of the manpower pool can vary by more than 400,000. Assumptions concerning the relationship between the contested portions of the population and accessibility for recruiting are even more important.

Despite these uncertainties about the "manpower pool" available to either side, it seems clear that the VC have begun to feel the effects of internal manpower shortages, perhaps even more seriously than in previous periods. The ability of the Viet Cong to maintain and particularly to again increase its flow of recruits will depend to a large extent on the military and political momentum they can sustain.

QUESTION IX

*What are NVA/VC capabilities for launching a large-scale offensive, with "dramatic" results (even if taking high casualties and without holding objectives long), in the next six months? (e.g., an offensive against one or more cities, or against most newly "pacified" hamlets.) How adequate is the evidence?*

In terms of numbers of men, arms, ammunition, logistics support and the like, the Communists clearly have the capability of launching a large scale offensive now or at any time within the next six months, if they are willing to take high casualties. They probably cannot achieve anything like the impact of Tet 1968. A recently captured enemy document points out that they are under no illusions about their ability to achieve such results again.

The Communists, however, now appear to believe that they can achieve sufficient results, even if not so dramatic, by periodically stepping up offensive activity and continuing to string out the war in such a way that the US will eventually agree to negotiate on terms acceptable to the Communists. As part of their next offensive round they hope to pull off a series of urban attacks which they believe will serve to highlight their military strength. In order to minimize civilian casualties and the possibility of US retaliation, such assaults may well be sapper raids targeted against allied civil and military installations within and on the outskirts of major cities.

We have abundant evidence from captured documents and prisoners [redacted] that the Communists have every intention of launching such a widespread series of attacks, including at least small scale incidents in Saigon such as the attack on 26 January

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in Cholon. Other information discloses their intent to hamper in every way possible the Accelerated Pacification Program or to take advantage of the spreading-thin of allied forces in support of that program to hit other targets.

The essential element in determining just how effective the Communist military effort will be over the next six months is the capability of the allies to preempt their offensive. Thus far, allied counteroperations have been very successful in delaying the Communist offensive. The evidence, however, indicates that the enemy is nonetheless slowly getting into a position from which he will shortly be able to launch an offensive which will at least attempt to send the level of US casualties much higher and sharply raise the visible level of urban disruption. The Communists would hope thus to demonstrate the appearance of strength and to convey the impression that there is little prospect for an early defeat or collapse of Communist Forces.

QUESTION X

*What are the main channels for military supplies for the NVA/VC forces in South Vietnam (e.g. Cambodia and/or the Laotian Panhandle)? What portion of these supplies came in through Sihanoukville?*

At the request of Assistant Secretary William P. Bundy, a joint CIA-DIA-State team of intelligence analysts recently completed a thorough review in Washington and in South Vietnam of the logistics channels and distribution systems used for the military resupply of NVA/VC forces in South Vietnam. The team concluded that although the amounts moving into South Vietnam cannot be precisely quantified, the logistics system operating in the Laotian Panhandle provides the basic channel for the movement of arms and ammunition to Communist forces in I, II and III Corps. The team also concluded that the Cambodian Army has been involved in the shipment of rice and other non-lethal supplies to Vietnamese Communist forces. Finally, the team found that elements of the Cambodian army are engaged, on an organized basis, and with the complicity of high-ranking military officials, in the shipment of arms and ammunition to the Communists in South Vietnam. The available evidence does not, however, permit confident estimates on the quantities involved in these arms shipments.

I, II and III Corps

The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong established a well organized logistic system in the Panhandle of Laos. The Communists have built an extensive roadnet consisting of routes leading from North Vietnam to Laos, routes within the Panhandle of Laos, and routes leading from Laos to South Vietnam, directly or by way of Cambodia. They continue to expand and maintain these roads. From the tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam roads and trails extend to the south along the Cambodian and South Vietnamese border,

connect base areas maintained in Cambodia by the Communists, and enter South Vietnam at various places along the border in II Corps and farther south at the junction of northern III Corps with the Cambodian border. Supplies enter III Corps through the provinces of Phuoc Long, Binh Long, Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia.

Although the tonnage of military supplies delivered to the Panhandle of Laos is sufficient to provide all of the requirements of the Communist forces in South Vietnam for military supplies from external sources, the overland route to III Corps is long, tedious and costly. For this reason forces in these areas rely on other external sources as a supplementary means of supply. The preponderance of the evidence, however, supports the estimate that the basic channel for the supply of III Corps is the overland route from Laos. Intelligence on shipments south to the tri-border area, the efforts to improve roads and trails, the use of the trails for personnel movements, and periodic reports of logistic activity along the trails are reasonably convincing. In addition, we believe that our knowledge of the organization for logistic support is sufficient to show that its orientation is toward Hanoi via Laos.

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IV Corps

Communist forces in IV Corps are resupplied by three major supply corridors. Two of these corridors extend into IV Corps from Cambodia; one from the Parrot's Beak Salient west of Saigon and the other from entry points on the Kien Giang/Chau Doc Province borders. The Parrot's Beak entry point is believed to be a conduit for supplies originating in Cambodia, including some munitions diverted from Cambodian Army stocks, and possibly for materiel transiting Cambodia from the Laotian Panhandle. The Kien Giang entry point is probably supplied by smuggling over the Cambodian beaches in the general area

east of Kep. Limited infiltration of supplies by sea directly along the coast, particularly in the area of Kien Hoa Province and south along the coast in An Xuyen Province, provides a third supply corridor for Communist units in IV Corps. We do not know the supply tonnages transiting these corridors, but resupply requirements for arms and ammunition in IV Corps are only about three tons a day.

The Sihanoukville Route

We believe that one cannot ascertain what portion of the military supplies reaching VC/NVA forces via Cambodia comes through Sihanoukville. Aside from a lack of precise and reliable information on the cumulative amount of military supplies reaching the Communist forces in South Vietnam through Cambodia regardless of point of origin, we have no reliable estimates of the total tonnages of arms and ammunition arriving at Sihanoukville or the volume of such materiel required by Cambodian Armed Forces. Although we know that Cambodia has been re-equipping its armed forces with Chinese and Soviet materiel in recent years, we have no measure of the quantities issued, stockpiled, or expended. Those military deliveries from Communist China and the USSR which have been identified, however, appear to be consistent with contracts acknowledged in recent years and to be plausibly associated with the re-equipment program.

MACV contends that "Cambodia has become the enemy's primary LOC, not only for rice and other non-lethal supplies, but for arms and ammunition as well".

CIA disagrees with the MACV position for the following reasons:

1) We do not believe that the intelligence available is adequate for firm estimates of either deliveries of military supplies

to Sihanoukville or Cambodia's requirements for military supplies. The methodology used by MACV to determine military deliveries does not distinguish between arms and ammunition and other types of military supplies.

2) We have serious reservations about the validity and reliability of many sources used by MACV to document its case and do not believe that these sources can be used to quantify the movements from Cambodian sources to NVA/VC forces.

3) We estimate that the interdiction campaign in Laos has not been able to reduce the flow of supplies from North Vietnam through Laos to South Vietnam to a level that is not adequate for the needs of the Communists in at least the I, II, and III Corps areas of South Vietnam.

4) Finally, although we concede that the Communists probably would take advantage of a means of channeling arms through Sihanoukville, we doubt that they would use a logistic system under foreign control as their primary supply route.

QUESTION X(A)

*What differences of opinion exist concerning extent of RVNAF improvement, and what is evidence underlying different views? (e.g., compare recent CIA memo with MACV views.)*

The differences of opinion that exist over the extent of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) improvement do not stem from the data emanating from Saigon. Indeed, we have no independent sources of information and are completely dependent on the statistical details provided by MACV. Rather, our differences revolve about the interpretations drawn from the data. We feel that there is too much emphasis on quantitative indicators of improvement, that qualitative factors are largely underplayed, and that certain key relationships between different sets of data are not analyzed.

For example, one of MACV's primary measurements of RVNAF improvement (or regression) are ratios using VC/NVA KIA. Generally, the comparison is between 1967 and 1968 -- in terms of RVNAF casualties, the number of combat operations, force levels, etc. One representative report noted that "In the first eight months of 1968 RVNAF killed enemy at three times the 1967 month rate... ." The two years, however, are not truly comparable since this period of 1968 witnessed a change in the character of the war. The enemy not only substantially intensified the level of combat but committed many major units to a more conventional-type warfare, thus increasing their exposure to Allied firepower. The increased level of KIAs is then attributable more to the heightened level of Communist offensive action than to RVNAF initiative and effectiveness. This conclusion is largely supported by the fact that the weekly average of total VC/NVA KIAs during the first half of 1968 --

the height of enemy offensive action during the year -- was double the average for the last half of the year. Moreover, these declining KIAs have occurred in the face of a sizable increase in the number of RVNAF large-scale operations.

Another element which further tends to weaken the KIA criteria is the number of RVNAF-credited KIAs which result from US air strikes and artillery support. Such statistics obviously are difficult to obtain. For example, during the first eight months of 1968, about 20 percent of all US sorties flown in South Vietnam were in support of RVNAF operations. The number of such sorties was on the rise, however, having increased from 16 percent of the total in April to 28 percent in August. Presumably, most such sorties are flown in support of large unit operations in which it is possible to inflict sizable casualties.

The over-emphasis on statistical improvement, is also reflected in the fact that a great deal is made of the rapid growth of South Vietnam's military forces and the increase in firepower resulting from the replacement of much of their World War II-type weaponry with more modern US arms. While such expansion undoubtedly enhances the potential for improving ARVN's (Army, Republic of Vietnam) combat effectiveness, a variety of qualitative factors must be present to bridge the gap between potential and realization. In South Vietnam this gap is considerable and the prospects for any substantial bridging in the near future are not favorable. Among the major obstacles are inadequate leadership, lack of concern for adequate training, low pay scales, corruption, and the debilitating involvement of the military establishment in politics. In reference to greater firepower, enemy forces also have had large parts of their inventories modernized and expanded.

The net effect of these problems is that US troops continue to carry the major share of the conventional fighting burden. Approximately 70

percent of US forces and VC/NVA main units are deployed in I and III Corps. About half of the ARVN regular forces are located in III Corps, largely to defend Saigon. However, the last MACV assessment (3rd Quarter, 1968) of these ARVN units in III Corps shows an over-all decrease in their performance and that these units are experiencing some of the highest desertion rates among RVNAF forces.

*a. Which is the level of effective, mobile, offensive operations? What results are they achieving?*

*b. What is the actual level of "genuine" small-unit actions and night actions in ARVN, RF and PF: i.e., actions that would typically be classed as such within the U.S. Army, and in particular, offensive ambushes and patrols? How much has this changed?*

The data on different types of actions as they relate to RVNAF improvement present a mixed picture. During the first nine months of 1968 the total number of RVNAF battalion-sized offensive operations nearly doubled while the days of operation per battalion rose about 30 percent. Moreover, the number of large-scale actions with enemy contact doubled and the operational days of contact rose about 40 percent.

On the other hand, the length and intensity of RVNAF operations apparently have declined while those of US units have increased. For example, the weekly average of battalion days of RVNAF operation declined from 647 to 630 (the US average jumped from 540 to 1,017). Moreover, while the weekly average number of days of operation per US battalion rose from 3.2 during the second half of 1966 to the physical maximum of 7.0 by the end of 1967, the RVNAF average still was only 4.3 days by the end of 1968. RVNAF small unit actions present an

even less favorable picture. While such operations rose slightly in 1968, the number resulting in enemy contact declined nearly 70 percent. Moreover, these actions with contact represented about one tenth of one percent of the total of such operations.*

*c. How much has the officer selection and promotion system, and the quality of leadership, actually changed over the years (as distinct from changes in paper "programs")? How many junior officers hold commissions (in particular, battlefield commissions from NCO rank) despite lack of a high school diploma?*

Perhaps the most critical factor contributing to ARVN's spotty performance is the inadequate number of well-trained and effective officers and NCOs. Rapid growth and combat losses have on occasion in 1968 left the regular forces with only half of their authorized strengths in the ranks of captain and above. Yet the military command has been unwilling to alter significantly its officer selection and promotion policies, preferring to follow the traditional pattern of selecting officers from the upper strata of South Vietnamese society. We cannot answer this question completely, but in 1967 only 10 percent of the promotions to junior officers were acquired on the battlefield. Moreover, of 1,273 promotions to the ranks of

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** Of an estimated 1,544,781 small unit actions during 1968, 1,845 resulted in enemy contact. Of these contacts 1,041 were at night. There is no way to determine how many of the total contacts, particularly at night, were the result of enemy initiative. Although US small unit actions declined and were far less (241,986 in 1968) than those of the RVNAF, the share of US operations with contact rose from about 2 percent to 4 percent.*

captain and above, only 4 percent were "battlefield" promotions. Service in battle obviously is not the best path to quick promotion, a factor which merely adds to the inclination to avoid combat assignments. While similar statistics for 1968 are not available to us, there is enough fragmentary information to indicate that the selection procedure has not changed much and that without a lycee (i.e., high school) diploma, the prospects for receiving a commission are rather slim.

*d. What known disciplinary action has resulted from ARVN looting of civilians in the past year (for example, the widespread looting that took place last spring)?*

We have received only fragmentary information on the subject of question. What little we have received indicates that the number of ARVN personnel disciplined for looting was small and the punishments relatively limited.

*e. To what extent have past "anti-desertion" decrees and efforts lessened the rate of desertion; why has the rate recently been increasing to new highs?*

Perhaps the most critical military problem facing the South Vietnamese (as well as the US) is the high rate of desertions from the GVN armed forces. It not only causes concern over the impact on the operational efficiency of the regular military units, but, perhaps more important, raises questions concerning the commitment of a country to its own defense. Past "anti-desertion" decrees have had almost no effect on the rate of desertions. While the average monthly rate of net desertions during the first quarter of 1968 averaged 7.7 per

thousand troops, during the last of the year, the rate averaged about 16 per thousand troops. About two thirds of the 1968 attrition in the RVNAF resulted from desertions.

A trend of particularly serious significance is the excessively high rate of desertions among the major combat units which are expected to eventually replace US combat forces. The net annual desertion rate among these units in 1968 was estimated at nearly 35 percent. The over-all average thus is substantially reduced by the lower rate among Regional Force (RF) and Popular Force (PF) units.

Perhaps a major cause of the high desertion rate is the large number of new men entering the service as a result of the current mobilization program. It has been estimated that perhaps 80 percent of recent deserters have been in service for six months or less. These men quickly succumb to the pressures of severed family ties, unfamiliar surroundings, poor morale, and fear of the unknown. Another significant factor may be the unit-hopping which results from a desire to be assigned to certain geographic areas, to avoid combat, or to obtain re-enlistment bonuses.

QUESTION XI

*To what extent could RVNAF--as it is now--handle the VC (Main Force, local forces, guerrillas), with or without US combat support to fill RVNAF deficiencies, if all NVA units were withdrawn:*

*A. If VC still had Northern fillers?*

*B. If all Northerners (but not regroupees) were withdrawn?*

Obviously, there are a number of general considerations bearing on a net estimate of RVNAF's potential effectiveness against whatever enemy forces remain. The critical element, however, is not whether NVA fillers remain behind (they number about 20,000-25,000), but what degree of US combat support continues. US artillery, tactical air, and mobility are vital elements in prosecuting the war. Without any of this remaining available, the RVNAF's fate would be problematical. Its chances would obviously be best against the VC forces only, and worst against the VC plus NVA fillers. Numerically, the ARVN, plus RF and PF, would have a considerable advantage. Its armament is much better than in 1965. The VC forces are also better armed, however, and if they reverted to a guerrilla war they would not need anything approaching numerical parity. Apart from numbers, however, the capabilities of Communist combat forces and the level or type of action they could sustain might be determined by the degree to which external supply channels remained open.

Fundamentally, it would be a matter of which forces had the stronger will to continue fighting for some time. Lack of aggressiveness and offensive-mindedness have always been ARVN's principal weaknesses. Without US support, we think ARVN's will

to fight offensively would diminish, thus providing the VC with some respite from continuing pressures. Such a respite would be highly useful, since the VC would have to rebuild their forces and perhaps redeploy some of them.

The question of will would also depend on non-military factors. The political atmosphere would be quite important to both sides. There would be strong suspicions in South Vietnam that any NVA withdrawal would only be temporary, while the US departed. There would also be apprehension that US combat support would not continue for long, and would also eventually be lost. On the other hand, the VC might believe they had been abandoned and betrayed and their morale could collapse. Moreover, the situation would vary greatly in different areas: IV Corps would be least affected and I Corps the most affected by US and NVA withdrawals. The situation would be confusing and unstable for some time, especially if there were a cease-fire lasting some months.

A. If RVNAF had US combat support (artillery and air) and all NVA, including Northern fillers in VC units, were withdrawn, the resulting situation would be the best possible case for the GVN. It is thus the least plausible scenario, since it is difficult to imagine North Vietnamese agreement to these conditions. Should these circumstances come to pass, however, the ARVN almost certainly could hold its own and probably make substantial progress against the remaining VC main and local force units and guerrillas. Without any US support, however, ARVN would at least be able to hold its own and make some progress against the VC unsupported by the NVA. A critical factor, and one almost impossible to assess in advance, would be the effect on the will of both the ARVN and the VC of a pull-out of North Vietnamese and US forces.

B. The worst situation for the RVNAF would be the withdrawal of <u>all</u> US combat support, while

the NVA fillers remained. It is also difficult to foresee how this would come about. It is so unfavorable to the GVN that the process of negotiating such an agreement or allowing it to be created would pose a grave threat to the GVN's stability. It is possible that the GVN leaders, foreseeing this situation, would lose hope and the armed forces would disintegrate.

Assuming, however, that the situation was stabilized, the prospects for the ARVN holding its own against VC forces--with their current level of NVA fillers--would be no better than even. Little progress would be made and some areas would almost certainly be abandoned. Over time, the situation in the countryside would gradually deteriorate and the threat to populated areas might grow. In the end the ARVN would probably suffer some serious defeats, with potentially important political consequences for the viability of the GVN.

The final scenario is the RVNAF with some US combat support versus the VC plus NVA fillers. The outcome would probably hinge on how much support for how long. ARVN would have a numerical edge, but III and IV Corps would probably remain contested for a long time. The VC forces, however, would not pose a critical threat as long as US artillery and air power supported ARVN efforts. A gradual attrition of VC/NVA effectiveness would continue, but this would be a long, grinding process.

In sum, no convincing case can be made, in our view, for the ultimate defeat of the VC by the ARVN, nor vice versa, so long as the VC are augmented by NVA fillers and supported logistically from North Vietnam. A guerrilla war could continue for a very long time; if it did, the initial advantages in manpower and material held by the RVNAF might gradually dissipate as they did in the early 1960s, especially if some infiltration from the North continued and the VC had the time to recruit and rebuild.

QUESTION XII

*To what extent could RVNAF--as it is now--also handle a sizable level of NVA forces:*

*A. With US air and artillery support?*

*B. With above and also US ground forces in reserve?*

*C. Without US direct support, but with increased RVNAF artillery and air capacity?*

A. It is unlikely the RVNAF would be able to hold its own against the combined NVA/VC forces currently committed to the war in South Vietnam even with US air and artillery support. Some RVNAF units have demonstrated that they can handle the NVA/VC forces put into the field against them. These units, however, represent only a small percentage of the total.

The RVNAF has its hands full now just providing support for pacification, garrison duty, and some limited operations against enemy Main Force units. Forced to take on the additional combat duties now primarily assumed by the US, RVNAF probably would not be able to handle the NVA/VC forces and the situation could soon return to what it was in 1965 when US combat forces had to be sent to South Vietnam.

It is possible that RVNAF, with US air and artillery support, could successfully wage an essentially defensive battle, in which the primary purpose would be to defend the major urban centers and populated areas. The GVN, however, has consistently taken the position that it cannot afford politically to implement a strategy which would call for the abandonment of certain isolated and hard-to-defend outposts such as those found in the central highlands.

The combat strength and aggressive attitude of US units in the field give ARVN units greater confidence and possibly help encourage a more aggressive mode of operations among some. Accordingly, the abrupt withdrawal of US infantry forces from the battlefield would probably reverse the very gradual but nonetheless real development of combat esprit among South Vietnamese fighters and commanders. It is not only a question of the levels of available firepower but of combat attitude.

B. US ground forces designated as reserve would shortly have to be thrown right into the front line of the fighting in order to bail out the RVNAF. There is little likelihood that such US forces could be kept in an essentially reserve position.

C. RVNAF would not be able to handle NVA/VC forces at their present strength without direct US support, even with increased artillery and air support of their own--at least not in the near term. RVNAF units have improved over the past year. However, the progress has been uneven and serious problems persist. The assumption of a greater combat role for the RVNAF will have to come in gradual stages. It is possible that this development will accelerate with time but this remains to be seen.

QUESTION XIII

*What, in various views, are the required changes --in RVNAF command, organization, equipment, training and incentives, in political environment, in logistical support, in US modes of influence--for making RVNAF adequate to the tasks cited in Questions IX and X above? How long would this take? What are the practical obstacles to these changes, and what new US moves would be needed to overcome these?**

The RVNAF would certainly be able to handle the VC without NVA fillers and probably could maintain the present military balance against VC even with NVA fillers, provided it had its own tactical air and artillery support on a level comparable to that now provided by the US to the allied effort. It is difficult for us at CIA to judge how long it would take to bring the RVNAF air and artillery arms up to such a level. We doubt that it could be done for the artillery in less than a year, and in the case of the air force, perhaps several years would be a more likely time frame.

If US ground forces were to remain in South Vietnam as a reserve, and we continued to provide the RVNAF with US air and artillery support, it is possible that the RVNAF could be improved sufficiently over a period of several years to take over the battle against NVA/VC forces at their present level. The RVNAF, however, would have to be greatly increased in manpower, improved in effectiveness, and upgraded in weapons and equipment such as helicopters

* *We assume the reference to Questions IX and X should read Questions XI and XII.*

(including gunships) and in command functions. Within one to two years the US could probably provide the RVNAF with enough hardware, and the training to use it, to enable the RVNAF to hold its own, as long as US reserve forces remain in the country. Other, deeper and more persistent problems, however, which have defied our efforts at improvement for many years, probably will not be overcome soon, no matter what we do.

The lack of an effective chain of command from the Joint General Staff down to the local commanders has plagued the RVNAF from the beginning. President Thieu has made some improvements in making the Corps commanders and other major military unit commanders responsive to him but a great deal needs to be done before General Vien, Chief of the JGS, is able to exercise effective control over his subordinate commanders.

The fact remains that the major unit commanders are political powers in their own right and each is extremely jealous of his own prerogatives. There is little that the US can do to alter this situation. Perhaps, faced with a pullout of US ground forces, the RVNAF commanders, for a time at least, would pull together in the face of the common threat from the Communists. But recent history, 1964 for example, offers reason to believe that the RVNAF generals might, instead, engage in fratricidal contests despite the war against the Communists.

It is unlikely that the RVNAF could be improved to the point at which it could handle NVA/VC forces at their present strength without continued direct US support. Even with improved air and artillery of its own, the RVNAF would have more than it could handle against its enemies. Local government forces, such as RF and PF, suffer from "crises in confidence," doubting that they can cope with the VC after a US troop withdrawal, and that national, regional, or even provincial officials can or will adequately support them.

Major factors in all of the above developments would be the political situation in Saigon, and the diplomatic situation regarding the peace talks. As long as the peace talks go on, and there is any prospect of a compromise with the Communists (or a cease-fire), it will be difficult to lower the level of RVNAF desertions or to improve the level of combat efficiency.

Any flare-up of bickering or infighting involving the various RVNAF commanders would also serve severely to hamper much progress being made in improving RVNAF combat capability.

QUESTION XIV

*How much, and where, has the security situation and the balance of influence between the VC and NLF actually changed in the countryside over time, contrasting the present to such benchmarks as end-61, end-63, end-65, end-67? What are the best indicators of such change, or lack of it? What factors have been mainly responsible for such change as has occurred? Why has there not been more?*

There is a wide disparity between the type and quality of information available on security and that available on VC influence. In part, this disparity exists because the relative ease of measuring security contrasts sharply with the conceptual difficulties associated with measuring influence. More importantly, the concept of VC influence did not mesh very well with the earlier GVN beliefs as to the nature of the war, and so influence as such was not considered as a separate, measurable variable until the adoption of the US-sponsored Hamlet Evaluation System (HES).

It is unlikely that we shall ever see a definition of VC influence that is both measurable in quantitative terms and still satisfactory to all analytical viewpoints. Nonetheless it is true that the degree of VC influence--taken in its broadest meaning--is an implicit variable in all of the measurement systems thus far used to chart the progress of pacification. Furthermore, these systems undoubtedly measure the relative influence of the GVN and VC far better than they measure "control" of population. "Control" is the most overused and mis-applied term in the Vietnam war. Much of the countryside and rural population of South Vietnam is not really controlled by either side but is influenced to varying degrees by both. It is in terms of influence, not control, that our data should be viewed, particularly HES data.

Prior to 1964, consistent, quantitative measurement systems--however crudely they might treat the concepts of influence, control, or security--did not exist, and we have only subjective assessments on which to base a historical analysis of this period. By the end of 1961, the Communist forces in South Vietnam were beginning to make significant gains in the countryside. The fall of the Diem government, at the end of 1963 paralyzed what little effort had been taking place to combat the growth of the VC power base, and by late 1964 the Communists had begun to infiltrate regular North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units that were probably ultimately intended to help administer the final, toppling blow to the GVN.

The crisis atmosphere existing in 1964 was the environment which brought forth the first reasonably consistent effort to quantify the pacification situation. When examing the data available from 1964 through 1966, however, it should be kept in mind that due to the atmosphere of crisis, the measurement systems were highly program-oriented and therefore their criteria for assessment of security--the main goal of all of the systems--varied as often as the pacification programs themselves. Additionally, certain of the assessment criteria reflected program goals rather than program achievement.

Of the quantitative data produced prior to 1967, beginning in December 1964 the data can be adjusted to reflect, generally, criteria consistent with the "population control" data derived from HES, thus producing a series for 1964-1968.

Although the best indicators of change in the pacification situation are contained in the HES data, the aggregate data on "population control" must be used with considerable caution. For one thing, the proportion of GVN-influenced population is inflated by the addition of the urban and semi-urban population--whose growth is due not to a desire to affiliate with the GVN as much as to the need to escape the destruction taking place in the countryside. Secondly,

the aggregate, or national, figures tend to obscure significant changes in the relative degrees of influence taking place in different parts of South Vietnam. Not only does the security and influence situation vary radically throughout the country, but also our rate of success or failure is different in each province.

In September 1968, prior to the advent of the the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, the pattern of VC influence was far from homogeneous throughout South Vietnam. The VC still maintained a strong grip on the coastal provinces from Thua Thien all the way south to Binh Dinh. The remainder of the coastal provinces, as far south as Saigon, were rated as "C." The VC also were holding on to the highland province of Pleiku, and, closer to Saigon, they had considerable influence in Phuoc Long, Hau Nghia, and Long An. South of Saigon, in the traditional VC stronghold of IV Corps, the GVN could really count on only one province, An Giang, with the rest ranging from "C" to "E."

During the twenty one months prior to the beginning of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (i.e., January 1967 - September 1968) the pacification programs had achieved significant progress in twenty-one provinces. Five provinces, however, significantly regressed during the same period. Since the start of the APC, in October 1968, significant additional progress--and no regression--has been recorded in nine provinces, four of which are in the IV Corps area south of Saigon. These improvements, however, are not yet sufficient to alter the basic pattern of VC influence--the VC's main strength being in I Corps, in the highland province of Pleiku, and in the heavily populated IV Corps area south of Saigon.

While a regional approach to pacification is a requirement for an understanding of the problem, once

the data have been disaggregated to provincial, or lower, level, it becomes difficult to discern overall trends. Because the HES data base is being continually improved through the addition and deletion of hamlets and the refinement of population data, moreover, the trends in aggregate HES figures can be affected significantly by statistical, rather than real, factors to the extent that they do not accurately reflect what is happening in South Vietnam.

In an effort to obtain a clearer view of broad pacification trends in the countryside, we have developed a special data base model of 5,870 hamlets. These hamlets are those which were rated each month from January 1967 through November 1968; i.e., we stabilized the data base at the January 1967 level and looked at what happened to these hamlets. When the HES data is examined in this form, the major trends in pacification over the last two years emerge quite clearly. For the first seven months of 1967, pacification programs were making slow, but steady progress. Beginning in August of that year, however, the VC began to resist pacification efforts more violently, bringing progress to a halt and even producing regression in some areas. This effort on the part of the VC was followed by the 1968 Tet offensive, which set the pacification situation back considerably. Following Tet, the level of VC activity picked up again in the May offensive, which again set back pacification efforts, though the May setback was considerably less than at Tet. The VC's August offensive, which by almost all estimates was a failure, was unable to produce regression in pacification but was able to halt progress. Since the August offensive, and particularly in the last quarter of 1968, pacification gains have been substantial but the climate for progress has been optimum, since the VC have made little real effort to contest that progress. The acid test of how solid recent progress has been will come when the VC initiate serious counter-activity (a phase that may now be beginning). Then we should see whether recent progress is largely statistical or if it reflects a real improvement in the rural situation.

QUESTION XV

*What are the reasons for expecting more change in the countryside in the next two years than in past intervals? What are the reasons for not expecting more? What changes in RVNAF, GVN, U.S., and VC practices and adaptiveness would be needed to increase favorable change in security and control? How likely are such changes, individually and together; what are the obstacles?*

The principal source for expecting more change in the countryside in the next two years is the level of performance of pacification programs during the last quarter of 1968. While there is no doubt that this progress was achieved largely as the result of a permissive VC military environment, there have been improvements in GVN enthusiasm, in the use of improved intelligence, and in the application of resources which are encouraging in and of themselves. The test of this progress, and of the enthusiasm itself, however, is yet to come.

Prior to the last quarter of 1968, there was little cause for optimism regarding pacification progress in that the Communist forces were able to render the programs almost impotent by use of their military power. Much of our reported progress in "population control" stemmed not from the ability to release the countryside from the grip of the Communist forces, but from our ability to organize rural development programs and, more importantly, from the massive influx of population fleeing the countryside. When HES is used to measure the capabilities and activities of the VC in the countryside--as opposed to measuring population control--we find that in the twenty one months after January 1967, we actually lost ground in our battle with the Communists. The Accelerated Pacification Campaign began on 1 November and rapid gains have been claimed for it. Reported progress indicates that we are now slightly better off than in January 1967, but our ability to hold on to these gains has not really been subjected to military test.

The rapid expansion into contested areas that produced the dramatic pacification progress also required that the pacification resources available to the GVN be spread quite thinly across the countryside. This could present a real problem at such

time as the VC military challenge occurs--a challenge which may already be underway. Even if this challenge never fully materializes, it is doubtful that the accelerated rate of real progress can be sustained for an indefinite period. While there is an initial impact in obtaining military and political access to hamlets previously under substantial VC influence, genuine, lasting progress in pacification requires not only security but that these initial gains be consolidated through real, rather than paper, programs of land reform, economic progress, and a host of governmental operations aimed at winning the support of the people. Should the GVN become enchanted with the statistical progress achieveable by widely dispersing its resources rather than consolidating its gains, not only would the gap between "population control" and real progress widen, but also the credibility of the GVN could be easily punctured by VC actions.

Much the same commentary could be attached to the phenomenal flow of population to urban and semi-urban areas. While this process was not a major factor in the gains made over the last quarter, it was a significant contributor to gains in "population control" made over the previous months. Although this process is widely hailed as being detrimental to the Viet Cong--which it is--it is also clear that pacification programs initiated by the GVN cannot take credit for it. More significantly, the influx of population presents a large mass of people who have no particular reason to develop an affinity for the GVN and unless rehabilitation programs are undertaken they could represent a factor that was neutral at best and disruptive at worst in the long-run prospect for pacification.

The success of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign strongly suggests that progress in pacification is heavily dependent on the military environment. Progress over the last three months was largely due to the fact that a significant number of VC military units withdrew to sanctuary areas and chose not to contest allied operations. This basic characteristic of pacification in South Vietnam converts the question of whether or not our recent gains can be held into a larger question

of VC intentions and strategy--that is, their response to new GVN programs. The VC are currently intensifying their efforts to counter the pacification program; such intensified Communist counter-mesures will provide an acid test of our real progress. If the VC can successfully implement their capability to mount offensives from time to time, then our recent gains in pacification could mean very little.

QUESTION XVI

*What proportion of the rural population must be regarded as "subject to significant VC presence and influence?" (How should hamlets rated as "C" in the Hamlet Evaluation System -- the largest category -- be regarded in this respect?) In particular, what proportion in the provinces surrounding Saigon? How much has this changed?*

The question of the proportion of South Vietnam's rural population that is subject to significant VC presence and influence and the question of how to treat "C" hamlets are very closely related. The sole justification for utilizing HES data to formulate categories of "population control" is to provide a degree of continuity between the early, crude pacification measurement systems and current HES data. The HES data is more fruitfully viewed as a collection of indicators than as a simple index of population control.

Since HES measures quite a wide spectrum of activities and influences on a hamlet, the final average of "C" may not reflect accurately the degree to which VC influence and power are felt. A substantial VC infrastructure, for example, may be offset by an economic development activity and the over-all grade of "C" may mask this characteristic of the hamlet. On the other hand, it would not be fully justified to consider all "C" hamlets as contested rather than under GVN control since many of them are not subject to continuing VC influence. Placing all "C" hamlets in the contested category would reduce the proportion of South Vietnam's population under GVN control from 73.3 percent to 44.6 percent in November 1968. This percentage, however, probably is not an accurate statement of the situation today.

The HES reporting form contains indicators of both friendly and enemy activities. It would appear reasonable to consider as contested those "C" hamlets which are characterized by "D" or "E" levels of VC military or political activity. Based on this criterion, 44.9 percent of the "C" hamlets should really be considered as contested rather than as GVN-controlled. The population in these contested "C" hamlets represents 50.8 percent of all South Vietnamese living in "C" hamlets. When this change in criterion for "contested" is applied to countrywide population figures, the proportion of the South Vietnamese living under GVN control becomes 58.7 percent in November 1968 (compared with 73.3 percent under the usual criterion). The contested population becomes 27.9 percent and the VC-controlled population remains at 13.4 percent. These proportions probably represent the most accurate statement of relative population control available to us today. When these proportions are related to South Vietnam's hamlet population only, the percentages become 50.0 for GVN-controlled, 34.5 percent contested, and 15.5 percent under VC control. Specifics on the "C" hamlets that are truly contested are contained in Table.

In the provinces surrounding Saigon, the proportions of category "C" population to total GVN-controlled population range from 43 percent for Bien Hoa to 87 percent for Hau Nghia. If approximately half of these people are in fact living under some form of substantial VC influence, pacification efforts even in the Saigon/Bien Hoa area would appear to face a long, uphill road. Over the last two months, however, indicators of VC military influence in these provinces have clearly been moving in a direction favorable to the Allies. This appears to be particularly true of Gia Dinh, where in the one month of November (1968) the VC lost their military influence in twenty hamlets, whose military activity indicators moved into the A or B category. Sizable contested and VC populations remain in these provinces, however, and any

long-run, stable improvement is heavily dependent on the level of VC military activity and, hence, on Allied abilities to reduce VC local military capabilities more or less permanently below a critical threshold.

Table

Contested "C" Hamlets and Population in SVN
1968

| | Contested "C" Hamlets 1/ | Population |
|---|---|---|
| January | 1603 | 2,317,487 |
| February | 1773 | 2,996,306 |
| March | 1778 | 2,650,568 |
| April | 1672 | 2,598,508 |
| May | 1671 | 2,505,747 |
| June | 1680 | 2,587,295 |
| July | 1645 | 2,629,943 |
| August | 1718 | 2,765,419 |
| September | 1752 | 2,738,234 |
| October | 1667 | 2,542,600 |
| November | 1698 | 2,552,704 |

*1. A contested "C" hamlet is one whose over-all rating is "C", but which contains ratings of "D" or "E", as an average indicator of VC military or political activity.*

QUESTION XVII

*What number or verified numbers of the Communist political apparatus (i.e., People's Revolutionary Party member, the hardcore "infrastructure") have been arrested or killed in the past year? How many of these were cadre of higher than village level? What proportion do these represent of total PRP membership, and how much--and how long--had the apparatus been disrupted?*

The allied attack on the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) was never properly integrated or systematically organized until the advent of the Phoenix program early in 1967 and, really, not until President Thieu--on 1 July 1968--signed the decree that made Phoenix/Phung Hoang a truly joint effort fully backed by the Vietnamese. Although progress has been made in the attack against the VCI, particularly in the last quarter of 1968, it has not yet produced a significant reduction in the Communists' ability to carry out essential activities.

During the past year, Phoenix reported 1,697 Party infrastructure members as "neutralized." Of these, 332 reportedly served at district level and above, while 1,365 reportedly served in the village and hamlets. No reliable intelligence estimate exists for the total number of PRP members belonging to the infrastructure. If there were as few as 30,000 PRP members in the infrastructure, however--probably a conservative estimate--only five and one-half percent could be considered "neutralized," according to Phoenix reporting. It is doubtful that such a low loss rate, even were it added to normal attrition would be a serious disruption to the Party.

Other conflicting considerations, however, bring the reported number of neutralized party members into question: It is believed that some provinces padded the figures for PRP members neutralized; moreover, an unknown number of captured PRP members returned to the Viet Cong. On the

other hand, additional PRP members of the infrastructure almost certainly were killed but never accounted for.

In addition to Party members, Phoenix reported 14,079 non-Party infrastructure members "neutralized." Well over 50 percent of these are released before a year's time. No figures are available on how many return to the Viet Cong.

What percent of the infrastructure--including Party and non-Party members--were "neutralized" in 1968 is impossible to gauge since the intelligence community has yet to come up with an agreed upon interpretation of its current definition. Neither the CIA/DIA estimate of 80,000-100,000 nor MACV's estimate of 82,000 should be used as a base to which the number of neutralizations can be compared. Were the same criteria used to estimate the infrastructure's size as is employed to tally Phoenix neutralizations, the size of the infrastructure would be considerably larger than either the CIA or MACV estimates.

The Communists continue to place high priority on reconstituting their infrastructure losses and appear to have been able to do so to the point that thus far their problems have not reached the critical stage. Nor do they appear likely to in the near future. In general, despite the number of low level VCI neutralized, the hard-core command cadres remain, as yet, largely untouched and inadequately identified for effective action against them. Thus, on the basis of actual performance to date, the Phoenix/Phung Hoang program has not cut very deeply into the muscle of the Communists' command and control apparatus. Through propaganda, cadre instructions, attack patterns, and other behavioral signs, however, the Communists have evinced considerable concern at the potential threat the Phoenix program embodies.

QUESTION XVIII

*What are the reasons for believing that current and future efforts at "rooting out" hard-core infrastructure will be--or will not be--more successful than past efforts? For example, for believing that collaboration among the numerous Vietnamese intelligence agencies will be markedly more thorough than in the past? What are the side-effects, e.g., on Vietnamese opinion, of anti-infrastructure campaigns such as the current "accelerated effort," along with their lasting effect on hard-core apparatus?*

Despite encouraging trends in the attack against the overall VCI, it is not likely that any significant breakthrough will be made in 1969 at "rooting out" hard-core VCI, especially high ranking PRP members. As previously noted, leading hard-core VCI cadres have suffered the least of all categories from the Phoenix/Phung Hoang program. It is anticipated that in 1969 the anti-VCI effort will make some progress with a slight qualitative increase resulting from emphasis on specific targetting, particularly at the district level and above. Nevertheless, most gains will continue to be made against the more accessible lower level VCI members. It is hoped that sufficient stability and momentum will have been built into the program so that if and when the GVN begins to assume full responsibility, the anti-VCI effort will continue to make progress. Presently, it is believed that the effort would be certain to suffer, perhaps critically, without U.S. guidance and assistance. Similarly, a settlement at Paris that created a political climate in South Vietnam improving Communist prospects, could also derail the entire program.

Until 1967, probably the greatest weakness in the prosecution of the conflict in Vietnam was the lack of any real, organized, coordinated, efficient counterattack on the VCI. Although the Phoenix program had its beginning in 1967, it was not until the Presidential Decree of July 1968 that the program was officially sanctioned by the GVN and a country-wide effort (Phung Hoang) was authorized to collect information on the VCI and to plan and launch operations targetted specifically against it. 25X1

25X1

25X1 This has required a high degree of cooperation and coordination at all levels, often where little or none had previously existed, and is considered to be a significant accomplishment in itself, given the previous propensity of all concerned (U.S. and Vietnamese) toward parochialism. Although there are still instances of obstructionism and lack of cooperation by local officials and agencies responsible for conducting the attack on the VCI, there has been an overall and continuing trend toward improved coordination 25X1

25X1 A good start has been made at accumulating the specific information needed to target against the VCI and an accompanying improvement in the quality of operations against the VCI should result as the effort gains momentum.

That the program is adding pressure on the VCI is probably best illustrated by the growing concern of the VC to its activities as reflected in their own propaganda and documents alerting subordinates to the program's operations. VCI targets are becoming more wary and elusive with a substantial fraction of the low level, easy targets probably already eliminated. Despite the enemy's extensive anti-Phung Hoang campaign and increased passive and active counter-intelligence measures, December results were the highest ever reported. This improvement

can be directly related to the Accelerated Pacification and Phung Hoang Campaigns as security forces have moved into contested areas and military operations and have penetrated once sacrosanct base areas where VC cadres have long been able to stay with relative impunity. Recent reports reveal that higher ranking VCI are now moving to more secure areas where it will be more difficult for Phung Hoang operations to be successful. These factors, plus an increased VC emphasis on identifying and targetting the program's personnel for elimination or subversion, indicate the seriousness with which the VCI views the present and potential effects of the program on it.

Although important steps have been taken to establish an active program and there have been signs of improvement as it has developed, the numerous problems hampering effective anti-VCI operations will require considerable time, patience, and effort to correct. Among the most serious of these effecting the attack on the VCI is the limited professional capability of many of the GVN personnel due to a lack of adequate training and experience. These shortcomings are especially apparent at the district level where a more experienced and efficient base is required, since this is the level at which the Phung Hoang program is geared. Additionally, the program continues to be hurt by the lack of full coordination at these lower levels where there still are overtones of separatism among the many agencies involved. Pressure from above has, however, forced increasing cooperation between some of these once totally insular, competing agencies.

25X1C

Since [redacted] are in the initial stages of organization and are still in the process of developing the data base required to operate effectively against the VCI, they have barely begun to direct operations. For this reason, operations targetted against specific VCI have not been too common and the attack on the VCI has continued

to be plagued by the conventional military orientation toward the shotgun approach of large operations. As agencies involved in anti-VCI operations have exhausted their limited intelligence base and pressure has increased for results, the tendency has been to rely on large scale cordon and search operations to the detriment of specific VCI operations based on detailed intelligence. Such sweeps, cordon and search operations, or ambushes on likely communications routes usually result in the apprehension of many guerrillas and VC supporters but few high quality VCI. The number of heliborne raids against specific VCI targets in VC "liberated areas" is steadily increasing, however, and these fast moving raid-and-run operations are producing effective results.

Other related areas of serious weakness in the anti-VCI program are in the fields of identification, classification, judicial processing, detention, and prisoner accountability. To assist in correcting these deficiencies, a classification list of VCI executive and significant cadre functions has been developed to reduce confusion in identification and to provide a uniform basis for assigning priority and selecting targets for neutralization. Perhaps of equal importance, the list will serve as a basis for proposed changes in civilian detainee processing and prescribes standard maximum and minimum sentences. Additional detention facilities are being prepared and more efficient utilization of those available as well as improved methods of prisoner accountability have been proposed to alleviate these problem areas.

An aggressive anti-VCI program has definite side-effects on the Vietnamese opinion given the preeminent position of the family in Vietnamese society. Since it is not unusual for a family to have members working for both the VC and the GVN, attacks by either side can directly affect the family unit. In addition to family contacts with the VC, there has always been a certain degree of accommodation between some local officials and VC cadres. Thus the intermix of

family loyalty coupled with a lack of real commitment by some GVN officials to move against an organization with which they may wish to reach a further accommodation in the future continues to be a serious problem and undoubtedly has an effect on Vietnamese opinion. There is no doubt that the people in the countryside have mixed feelings toward the accelerated efforts to eliminate the VCI since these efforts often affect family members, cause disruption in their area, and throw off a local balance which may have led to a relatively peaceful situation. Involvement with the programs of either side is contrary to the peasant's basic desire to be left alone by both. If this is not possible, he then is willing to accept a degree of security from whomever is in control. Recently, hamlets under the Accelerated Pacification Campaign appear to be attracting a significant number of refugees from VC areas, apparently confirming that the key to public approval and support is the ability to provide continuing security and to prevent reprisals by the opposition.

Recognition of the foregoing problem areas and the initiation of corrective measures where possible, along with the increased degree of coordination and cooperation required [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted]

all contribute to a belief that future anti-VCI efforts should be more successful than those of the past. There are no guarantees that the corrective actions taken will be successful, [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] However, the progress that has been made since July 1968 has been most impressive and encouraging. Probably the highest testimonial to the activities and potential of the Phung Hoang Program has been the concern exhibited by the VCI as it realizes that at long last, though in a neophyte stage, a counterattack has been launched directly against it.

QUESTION XIX

*How adequate is our information on the over-all scale and incidence of damage to civilians by air and artillery, and looting and misbehavior by RVNAF?*

Information that would lead directly to an estimate of physical damage by bombing or the physical/psychological damage affected by looting and other types of military misconduct is not reported on anything resembling a systematic basis. Sporadic reports reach Washington concerning civilian complaints of such actions but currently there is no known way to establish a reliable data base for this information.

The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) does contain information on two aspects of the problem: (1) incidents of misconduct by friendly elements that adversely affect the hamlet, and (2) actions by friendly elements during military operations that adversely affect relations with the hamlet. It is not known how reliable this data base is, but based on a sample of 5,870 hamlets that were rated each month consistently since January 1967, it would appear that approximately one percent of the hamlets each month are victims of some sort of serious misconduct by ARVN; another one percent each month receive similar treatment at the hands of Regional or Popular Forces (RF/PF), and another three fourths of one percent fall victims of serious misconduct on the part of US forces. Additionally, about four percent of the hamlets are either bombed, strafed, defoliated, or otherwise harmed during the course of friendly military operations. A higher percentage of hamlets would appear to experience one or more of these phenomena in a minor form.

It is imperative that these measures be viewed with considerable discretion, both because the data base has not been validated and because no systematic weighting system is available to discriminate between lasting damage and accidental property destruction.

Even under the most generous interpretation of the available data, however, it must be admitted that the rural hamlets take a tremendous beating by both friendly and enemy forces. This aspect of the war is borne out by the rapid flow of refugees and migrants to the urban areas of South Vietnam. While the long-run impact of this process would, at first examination, appear to be favorable to the GVN, it is probably true that a considerable proportion of the urban population which is normally classified as "GVN-controlled" is made up of a recently rural populace which has little reason to affiliate itself with the cause of its social disruption.

QUESTION XX

*To what extent do recent changes in command and administration affecting the country-side represent moves to improve competence, as distinct from replacement of one clique by another? What is the basis of judgment? What is the impact of the recent removal of minority-group province and district officials (Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, Montagnard) in their respective areas?*

Changes in provincial and district level personnel have been frequent over the years, but they have seldom shown any discernible patterns. There have been persistent allegations that a brisk market existed in the buying and selling of provincial administrative positions, but little hard evidence has ever been brought forward to document such charges. Politics within the military establishment have clearly been a factor influencing provincial assignments but, again, no clear pattern is evident. Certainly some favoritism has been involved in personnel selection, but it is unlikely that any one military clique could establish a predominant hold over the administration of provincial affairs. Religious, regional, and political party affiliations are undoubtedly factors involved in military personnel postings and promotions as is, to a lesser extent, the element of corruption in assignments to sinecures or noncombatant jobs. Personnel loyalties and interrelationships within the military establishment are complex, however, and the divisive elements that plague the South Vietnamese body politic as a whole are all reflected to at least some extent within ARVN. Thus no individual group or clique would be likely to dominate the rural administrative machinery on a nationwide basis.

Two major changes that took place at the beginning of 1968 produced a significant breakthrough in the GVN's efforts to upgrade the administration of the countryside. The first involved stripping the four corps commanders of their authority to appoint, or

remove, province and district chiefs within their areas of responsibility. By restoring this authority to the Ministry of the Interior and by making it once again a national matter, many of the local abuses that had existed were sharply curtailed. This did not remove all pressures on province officials that ARVN division or corps commanders could exert, but the level of such pressures was measurably curtailed. Concomitantly, President Thieu and members of the Cabinet began to hold provincial seminars on pacification in each of the corps areas. This direct and clear manifestation of presidential interest has had an appreciable and beneficial effect on the performance and morale of provincial officials.

The second major change initiated last year has been the training of provincial and district staff personnel in the objectives and programs of pacification for which they are responsible. For years ARVN personnel have been placed in provincial assignments more or less prepared for the military aspects of the insurgency, but totally unfamiliar with a vast number of the GVN's political fence-mending efforts that fall within the category of pacification. Training sessions and seminars have been instituted at the National Training Center at Vung Tau to ensure that the aims of the GVN's pacification policies are clearly understood by rural administrators.

Our regional officers and provincial advisers have had a generally favorable over-all reaction to the changes in personnel that have been made during 1968. In I Corps, changes in district chiefs and their staffs have meant more competent, honest personnel and as a result, effectiveness has increased. GVN efforts to train officials at district level and below have been initiated too recently to determine how successful the effort will be; but initial results have been encouraging. Minority group officials have been virtually nonexistent in I Corps, but two political parties whose strengths lie almost totally in I Corps--the Revolutionary Dai Viet and the Nationalist Party (VNQDD)--are dominant facts of political

life in the area and in general it is necessary for provincial officials to make some form of accommodation with their leadership. With the strengthening of the GVN and its ties to its northernmost provinces there has been a diminution of the pressure that these local entities have been able to exert.

In II Corps, our field officers have found significant improvement in administration since early 1968, when the present Corps Commander, General Lu Mong Lan, replaced General Vinh Loc--the last of the real "war lords"--whose semi-autonomous status in the area had presented the government with a sizable impediment in its efforts to improve real administration. On balance, the five new province chiefs appointed in II Corps last year are a great improvement over their predecessors. Since Tet of 1968 and particularly since Col. Hai became National Police Director, personnel replacements have reflected a new emphasis on the appointment of career policemen rather than ARVN officials to provincial police chief posts. Although some of the new police appointees have been tabbed as "Thieu men," it would be an oversimplification to say that one clique has supplanted another. Across the board, the feeling exists in II Corps that there has been an upgrading and increased professionalism in the administration of the corps area.

The few removals of minority-group officials have had no discernible impact. One montagnard province chief was replaced by another montagnard who has proven to be more competent; two minority-group district chiefs--both corrupt and inefficient--were replaced by better men.

Our representatives in III Corps see little intrinsic difference in recent administrative appointees there. Effectiveness is primarily influenced by the guidance and direction rural officials receive from corps and the national government. The replacement of the province chief in Tay Ninh Province, the traditional seat of the Cao Dai religion, has been the

principal minority group change. In this instance, the Cao Dai did give tenuous support to the previous chief and are distrustful of the present incumbent. The Cao Dai themselves, however, are so faction-ridden that there is no truly cohesive Cao Dai support, since each faction looks primarily to its own interests.

The appointment of General Nguyen Duc Thang as IV Corps Commander in March 1968 clearly had a beneficial effect on the administrative practices there. Though his tenure as corps commander was short, his earlier experience as minister of Revolutionary Development enabled him to mesh the civilian pacification efforts with military actions to a far greater degree than had ever existed, and Thang's work in this field has been carried on by his successor, General Nguyen Viet Thanh, the present corps commander. New police and provincial appointees have been of a higher caliber and the assignment to district level positions of graduates of the National Institute of Administration has improved the image of the government at the lowest levels. The Hoa Hao, who are the predominant minority group in the delta--along with the ethnic Cambodian population--have not been a problem for local administrations. The Hoa Hao suffer from factionalism, in a manner similar to the Cao Dai, but in their strongholds--An Giang and Chau Doc provinces--Hoa Hao officials are sufficiently numerous and important to ensure that general Hoa Hao interests are well considered by the government.

Countrywide, provincial and district administration still is affected by the general lack of leadership that is a major problem at all levels for the GVN. The heritage of a mandarinal system and the divisive influences aggravated by the past thirty years of Vietnamese history have produced basic problems in rural administration that are not amenable to quick or easy solutions. But the record of 1968 has been a good one, over all, and improvement, while not dramatic, has been steady.

QUESTION XXI

*How adequate is our information, and what is it based upon concerning:*

*a. Attitudes of Vietnamese elites not now closely aligned with the GVN (e.g., religious leaders, professors, youth leaders, professionals, union leaders, village notables) towards: Participation -- if offered -- in the GVN; the current legitimacy and acceptability of the GVN; likewise (given "peace") for the NLF or various "Neutralist" coalitions; towards US intent, as they interpret it (e.g., US plans for ending the war, perceived US alignments with particular individuals and forces within Vietnam, US concern for various Vietnamese interests)?*

Although there are admittedly numerous weaknesses in the breadth and depth of our knowledge of leadership elements of the various political and social elites in South Vietnam, especially beyond Saigon and a few major cities, we feel reasonably confident that their attitudes on many key issues can be assessed on the basis of existing contacts with US officials or on the basis of past experience.

In any case, we feel the following general judgments can be made with some confidence:

a. Through an amalgam of diverse causes -- including the course of recent Vietnamese history, national temperament, social and political traditions and educational background -- many if not most of the politicized Vietnamese in South Vietnam are unlikely to give positive enthusiastic support to any Saigon government. They will rally in the face of an imminent common danger, but once the danger recedes, the pleasures of carping, squabbling and internecine political strife will prove well nigh irresistible.

b. One of the very few points on which a broad spectrum of politically aware Vietnamese political opinion is united, however -- and this spectrum ranges from refugee Northern Catholic army officers to probably Thich Tri Quang himself (if not all of his An Quang followers) -- is distaste and dislike for the prospect of Communist rule, either by the Party itself or by one of the Party's front groups, which are regarded in Vietnam as being just that. Were there not this general widespread aversion to Communist domination, the war probably would have ended (inevitably) in a Communist victory years ago.

c. Whatever their private preferences may be, however, many Vietnamese will act in the conviction that they simply cannot afford to wind up on what ultimately proves to be the losing side of the struggle. This essential pragmatism adds a latent but constant element of potential volatility to the Vietnamese political scene, even when the surface is calm.

d. There is a widespread conviction among politicized Vietnamese that US support (of at least some form) is essential to preventing a Communist take-over. Thus the Vietnamese reading of the US Government's policies and intentions (which may or may not reflect what those policies and intentions actually are) will have a profound effect on South Vietnam's political climate and its population's political behavior over the coming months.

* * *

In terms of accepting or participating in the GVN -- or in the NLF or a neutralist coalition -- one of the basic attitudes common to many of the nonaligned elites is that of noninvolvement. Our information on attitudes is sufficient to indicate that the reasons underlying noninvolvement vary widely among the various groupings. Custom and tradition, for example, weigh heavily upon religious leaders, village notables, and the Chinese commercial

class. To the extent that historically rooted traditions are operative, the noninvolvement of these groups is not likely to change quickly. The noninvolvement of student leaders, on the other hand, probably is based more upon current disaffection and dissatisfaction and is hence more volatile. Beyond such generalizations lies a good deal of uncertainty. Our information, for example, is not really adequate to determine how large a proportion of the uncommitted might opt for one side or the other at some point in time in order to influence the outcome of the conflict. Despite such uncertainties, we believe that a large proportion intend to remain unaligned as long as possible.

*b. How adequate is our information, and what is it based upon, concerning: Patterns of existent political alignments within GVN/RVNAF and outside it--reflecting family ties, corruption, officers' class, secret organizations and parties, religious and regional background--as these bear upon behavior with respect to the war, the NLF, reform and broadening of the GVN, and responses to US influence and intervention?*

On key figures and political alignments within the GVN/RVNAF and among the leading political and socio-religious groups, we have fairly complete information about religious and regional backgrounds and personal loyalties, although gaps begin to develop at lower leadership levels. Although we cannot always anticipate the events that will trigger a crisis, our knowledge has been generally sufficient to anticipate what issues and what US actions or forms of intervention are likely to trigger what types of responses. Within a generally broad framework of supporting the anti-Communist cause, however, South Vietnamese leaders within and outside the government continue to give little evidence of subordinating narrow, particular interests to the national cause, and loyalties are frequently found to shift for reasons of expediency.

QUESTION XXII

*What is the evidence on the prospects--and on what changes in conditions and US policies would increase or decrease them--for changes in the GVN toward:*

*a. broadening of the government to include participation of all significant non-Communist regional and religious groupings (at province and district levels, as well as cabinet);*

*b. stronger emphasis, in selection and promotion of officers and officials, on competence and performance (as in the Communist Vietnamese system) as distinct from considerations of family, corruption, and social (e.g., educational) background;*

*c. political mobilization of non-Communist sympathies and energies in support of the GVN, as evidenced, e.g., by reduced desertion, by willing alignment of religious, provincial and other leaders with the GVN, by wide cooperation with anti-corruption and pro-efficiency drives?*

a. Broadening the GVN. The first question to be resolved is to define those regional and religious groups that warrant cabinet representation. For those who prefer a broad definition, the prospects of including all such groups are virtually non-existent. For those who would exclude such groups as the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and the various Dai Viet and VNQDD factions from cabinet representation, the problem is far less formidable. With the addition of strong southern representation in the cabinet during the past year, it could even be argued that the essential balance of vital cabinet representation has already been struck. Others who prefer the narrow definition point out

that representation from central Vietnam is thin, and that ultimately some kind of accommodation between the government and Tri Quang's Buddhists should be reached. In any event, current evidence indicates that while adjustments may be made in the cabinet during the next few months, no significant broadening is likely.

At the province and district levels, the problem is somewhat different. Virtually all province and district chiefs are military officers appointed by the central government. The issue of selecting province and district chiefs was raised at the time the constitution was written in early 1967; many civilians arguing for an electoral process. But the GVN--with US concurrence--maintained that under wartime conditions these positions must be appointed, with the understanding that they would be filled by military officers. Thus the problem at this level has assumed the form of a civilian-military rivalry. Because the province and district chiefs have now become key figures with control over some ARVN units, the prospects for increasing civilians in these offices are very remote so long as the war continues.

Even so, there is some degree of local, as opposed to civilian, representation within the present system. There have been or are military province and district chiefs of montagnard backgrounds in the central highlands, and Cao Dai provincial officials in areas where that sect is strong. For all practical purposes, An Giang and Chau Doc provinces are run by Hoa Hao officials. Other officers occasionally have local ties to the areas in which they are assigned. We have no evidence, however, that the proportion of such officials is increasing.

b. Emphasis on competence in selection and promotion. With the ascendancy of President Thieu during the past year or so, more than one half of

of all province and district chiefs have been replaced. We have evidence, in the form of reports from US field advisers, that the replacements generally are more competent than their predecessors. Strictly on this basis, however, it is difficult to state that there has been a significant and deliberate increase in emphasis on competence at the expense of political loyalties and other considerations. Indeed, political loyalty almost certainly remains paramount (i.e., there is no evidence that President Thieu has approved the appointments of many who are at political odds with him). Our feeling is that because President Thieu has wider associations than did his predecessors with the same appointive powers, the number of politically acceptable candidates has increased, thus allowing for more latitude in the search for competency.

There are, of course, a great many other positions in the government and armed forces and our evidence on increased competence in these positions is at best very sketchy. Civilian officials within the various ministries are almost certainly selected in accordance with the political coloration of their respective ministers. So long as the cabinet remains a delicate and highly charged political balance, this tendency will remain strong. For those whose appointments receive presidential consideration, however, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the same general factors described in the preceding paragraph are at work to some extent.

There remains the broader question of eligibility for government or military service at a meaningful level of those not already in the government (e.g., the degree of opportunity for the bright and vigorous peasant who might become an excellent company commander). The educational and social restrictions on eligibility for, let alone advancement in, government service have been long-standing weaknesses of the GVN. Though the war and

the inordinate size of the RVNAF have probably created opportunity for peasants that otherwise would not have existed, there is no evidence of GVN encouragement or of any change in normal requirements. Even given vigorous US prodding and high level GVN concurrence, it would be prudent to envisage increased social mobility in South Vietnam in terms of decades.

In weighing GVN performance in this area, however, it is misleading and unrealistic to compare the actualities of GVN behavior with the tenets of Communist theory or propaganda. The statement of subsection (b) of Question XXII implies that, in contrast to the GVN, the Vietnamese Communists promote solely on merit and performance, without any reference to family or social background or other extraneous considerations. This is just not true. The Communists simply do not apply the same educational, social or other criteria in this sphere that the GVN applies. It is certainly the case that a poor peasant youth (other factors aside) has a better chance of becoming a company commander in the VC Forces than he would have in ARVN, but this does not mean that the Communists promote solely on merit. "Class origins," doctrinal orthodoxy, absence of "incorrect" or "impure" thoughts, and many other factors entirely unrelated to merit or performance weigh very heavily in Communist decisions on matters of advancement--or demotion. Even a brilliant performance record will not necessarily protect an officer of peasant stock from being cashiered--or worse--should the Party ever decide to classify his parents as "landlords." Furthermore, even the Vietnamese Communist Party, in practice, is not immune to the pull of regional or village ties or the influence of personal loyalties or jealousies and the Party is more than vulnerable to the ripple effect of doctrinal battles won or lost by contenders in the higher command echelons.

c. Political Mobilization. We doubt that fluctuating ARVN desertion rates can be considered as a true indicator of the Vietnamese population's degree of political mobilization. There are simply too many other factors involved. For example, desertion rates went up sharply in the late spring of 1968, following a rapid expansion of the armed forces. We do not believe that this increased desertion reflected a lessening of political mobilization, but rather that it was largely the natural result of the sudden expansion. (The same pattern was evident during the last large RVNAF expansion in 1966.) As the unreliables are weeded out and as ARVN's command and control system gradually copes with the larger numbers of personnel, the desertion rates should go down. And this trend, when it begins to occur, should probably not be construed as an increase in political mobilization.

The willing alignment of religious and other leaders with the GVN has fluctuated in the past and will most likely continue to do so depending upon future events and the government's relation to them. Within the past year, there have been instances when broad and genuine endorsement of the government's position have been expressed by such leaders (i.e., in the wake of the Tet offensive and at the time of the US bombing halt on 1 November). At other times, support has naturally been more muted, and disapproval has been expressed when some government act seemed to warrant it. We have no evidence suggesting that these rather normal fluctuations will not continue.

Willing cooperation with anti-corruption and pro-efficiency drives, though they would be limited to persons within the government, would almost certainly reflect a virtual transformation of the government in terms of discipline and political unity. But evidence on the prospects for these occurrences is not good. Though corruption has perhaps been toned down and public attention has

been diverted from it at least temporarily, the basic problem will remain so long as the large US material presence remains in Vietnam and so long as the social ethos gives family or personal ties prior place to loyalties to abstractions such as "national interest." Pro-efficiency drives have not been a characteristic of the GVN to date, and there is no evidence of any plans for them. However, given US prodding, GVN concurrence, and some skillful psychology, such drives might prove to be useful devices in harnessing in a useful way the incessant competition among the various political groupings in the government.

The foregoing simply illustrates some of the difficulties in attempting to detect an increase in political mobilization of the accidental or disorganized variety. It seems clear that the creation of an effective national political organization is the major change needed to provide the GVN with a dependable, enduring political base. The problems and shortcomings of the Lien Minh amply illustrate the fundamental problems involved in establishing such an organization. For in order to function effectively, such an organization must have real political power. The conflict that would ensue between it and the army, which currently is the real if not the constitutional power base, is only too obvious. Because of the difficulty inherent in the problem, political organizational efforts have been little more than marginal efforts during the past few years. In light of potential political competition with the NLF in peacetime, GVN leaders may soon begin to deal with the problem, though despite Thieu's verbal endorsement of Lien Minh, there is as yet no real sign of a serious address to this problem on the part of the GVN's top leadership.

QUESTION XXIII

*How critical, in various views, is each of the changes in question 22 above to prospects of attaining--at current, reduced or increased levels of US military effort--either "victory," or a strong non-Communist political role after a compromise settlement of hostilities? What are views of the risks attendant to making these changes, or attempting them; and to the extent that US influence is required, on US practical ability to move prudently and effectively in this direction? What is the evidence?*

There is no question but that South Vietnam's political stability has a bearing on its military performance, and is in turn affected by the latter, and that both are affected by the levels and trends of the US effort. Intensified military efforts by themselves, however, neither compensate for nor cure basic political and administrative shortcomings which diminish the GVN's attractiveness to many who do not positively support it, including many whose opposition to the prospect of Communist rule is considerably greater than their dislike of the GVN. Furthermore, the attitudes of non-Communist groups which are currently aloof from the government, or are committed only passively, are not likely to be greatly altered by changes in US force or aid levels, unless these are so greatly changed as to result in early military "victory" or early GVN defeat. There have been in the past, and may be in the future, positive short-term public or military responses to emergencies, anti-corruption measures, pay raises or promotion policies, but we are not sanguine that such measures will be any more rapid or far reaching than in the past, or will have the needed short-term effect.

South Vietnam has shown progress whether measured against 1961 or 1964, but it has been slow, fragile and evolutionary. It is difficult to see how the US can largely disengage over the next few years without jeopardizing this. There are certain programs (Phoenix, etc.) which if effectively pursued in this period may well increase the GVN's margin for stumbling without falling. In general, however it appears that the RVNAF will for some time remain the only national political force capable of matching the Communists from the point of view of strength and organization. It must, therefore, be kept cohesive and disciplined, and military corruption kept at tolerable limits; it will also be politically affected by US force levels and operations. While this does not mean that all feasible steps should not be taken to encourage the strengthening and participation of civilian groups, it does not appear realistic or prudent to expect that civilian groups alone can stand up to the Communists within the next few years or that they should be given the practical burden of this effort at the expense of the military.

QUESTION XXIV

*How do [US] military deployment and tactics today differ from those of 6-12 months ago? What are reasons for changes and what has this impact been?*

This question is not addressed for reasons explained in the Preface.

QUESTION XXV

*In what different ways (including innovations in organization) might US force-levels be reduced to various levels, while minimizing impact on combat capabilities?*

This question is not addressed for reasons explained in the Preface.

QUESTION XXVI

*What is the evidence on the scale of effect of B-52 attacks in producing VC/NVA casualties? In disrupting VC/NVA operations? How valid are estimates of over-all effect?*

The few existing studies and the available raw intelligence make it clear that B-52 strikes do account for a substantial number of casualties, have effectively disrupted VC/NVA operations, and have a strong adverse psychological impact on enemy troops. Unfortunately several factors -- a poor evidence base, a lack of ground follow-up, and the inaccessibility of many targeted areas -- make it impossible to arrive at any quantitative measurement of the effect of B-52 strikes that can be regarded with confidence.

Recent JCS, J-3, studies based on post-strike body counts obtained from aerial and ground observations between May 1968 and October 1968 accounted for 2,933 enemy dead as a result of 3,895 sorties. These J-3 findings would indicate a kill ratio of .74 per sortie, or an implied KIA rate of 1,300 per month during 1968. Thus, projections based on the J-3 studies would indicate that B-52 attacks in South Vietnam may have accounted for more than 16,000 enemy KIA and a like number of wounded during 1968. These estimates obviously understate enemy casualties, particularly when they are based principally on limited ground follow-ups. Normally, the enemy has had the opportunity to remove or conceal his dead before leaving the strike area.

A MACV post-strike assessment for earlier periods implies an even higher 1968 KIA rate. Between June 1966 and October 1967 245 B-52 strikes reportedly killed 2,489 enemy troops or approximately

10 per strike. If six aircraft are assumed to constitute one strike, this would be 1.7 killed per sortie, or an estimated 3,000 KIA per month if applied to the 1968 sortie rate.

An informal CIA study of captured documents and rallier-POW interrogations would suggest that as many as 6,300 troops per month could have been killed and a like number wounded by B-52 attacks during 1968, but these figures are substantially inflated. Our analysis was based on 233 documents and interrogations mentioning B-52 strikes that were selected randomly from intelligence reports available in 1968. These sources revealed 4,871 killed as the result of 229 strikes, or an average rate of 3.5 per sortie. However, the document and interrogation approach can be expected to yield an estimate higher than actual results because these sources fail to report missions where no one was killed, or where targets were missed completely.

Although we are unable to determine the extent of bias in any of these estimates it is apparent that B-52 strikes have become a significant factor in the attrition of enemy forces. To the best of our knowledge B-52 casualties confirmed by ground follow-up are included in the official KIA figures. Thus, to the extent that the remaining B-52 strikes are indeed casualty producing, the official KIA figures may understate somewhat the actual level of enemy attrition.

B-52 strikes undoubtedly disrupt VC/NVA operations, but because of the inaccessibility of most targeted areas, the extent of this disruption also cannot be quantified. We believe it reasonable to assume that materiel losses due to airstrikes of all kinds probably are at least equal to those resulting from Allied ground operations, some 20 tons a day during 1968. These losses may be critical in regard to specific military operations but do not represent a significant burden in terms of the

enemy's over-all resupply capabilities. In addition to casualties and materiel losses, B-52 strikes induce numerous troops to desert or defect. Interrogation of captured enemy senior officers indicates that B-52 attacks are also a significant threat in rear areas where no other weapons system is really effective. In particular, B-52 strikes contributed greatly to the defense of Khe Sanh.

VC/NVA forces also apparently retain some capability to reduce the disruptive effects of B-52 strikes through the use of an elaborate warning system.

QUESTION XXVII

*What effect is the Laotian interdiction bombing having:*

*a. In reducing the capacity of the enemy logistic system?*

The air campaign in Laos is not resulting in any sustained reduction of the capacity of the enemy logistic system, although it is causing the enemy intermittent, localized transport problems. Agreed CIA/DIA estimates of the road capacity and volume of truck traffic on the major access routes from North Vietnam into Laos indicate that these routes are being used at only 10 to 15 percent of their capacity. Such a low level of use, and the experience of four years of observing the effects of bombing, make it clear that the capacity of these routes cannot be reduced by bombing to a level that imposes a meaningful restraint to the enemy's ability to resupply his forces in South Vietnam. All available evidence indicates that traffic in the Laotian Panhandle is continuing at levels equal to, or slightly higher than, comparable periods in the past.

Aerial photography during December and early January revealed that the road network through and around the most heavily attacked logistics chokepoints in southern Laos was capable of supporting the amount of traffic entering from North Vietnam. Although these areas have been repeatedly interdicted, causing numerous delays and disruptions, comparative photography indicated that trucks were able to move through the chokepoints or on nearby bypasses. This traffic apparently moved under cover of darkness and during periods of poor visibility.

Pilots sightings in southern Laos averaged 1,140 trucks per week during November and December 1968 and increased to 2,240 during the first three weeks

of January, a slight increase over similar periods last year. Although part of the continued high level of truck sightings since 1 November may be explained by an increase in sorties, most of the additional sorties have been directed against fixed targets such as roads, truck parks, and enemy installations. Further, there has been an increase in truck sightings on main road bypasses, indicating the enemy's ability to circumvent interdicted roads and chokepoints.

The number of truck movements detected by sensors has increased substantially since the bombing halt in North Vietnam, from less than 400 per week in October 1968 to almost 6,000 in January 1969. Although this increase was due in part to the placement of additional and more effectively located sensors, sensor data indicated that the Communists have increased their use of Routes 128, 236A, 239, 917, and the alternate routes in the area between Mu Gia Pass and Sepone.

Reports from roadwatch teams along the two main entry routes into Laos also indicate that traffic within Laos has not been substantially disrupted by air attacks. Teams on Route 15 in the Mu Gia Pass area reported that traffic moving into Laos in October 1968 - January 1969 was about the same as in the same periods in 1967 and 1968, as shown in the tabulation below:

Average Number of Trucks Per Day Southbound on Route 15

| | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 |
|---|---|---|---|
| October | 17 | 19 | -- |
| November | 10 | 11 | -- |
| December | 20 | 21 | -- |
| January | 22 | 25 | 25 |

Although roadwatch teams along Route 912 have not been close enough to the road to estimate traffic flows, infrequent reporting from these teams have indicated that traffic on Route 912 has been the same or higher in the past few months compared to similar periods last year.

Other intelligence sources indicate that since 1 November there has been a relatively continuous flow of supplies and vehicular traffic along Routes 912, 911, 9 and 914.

*b. In destroying materiel in transit?*

It is extremely difficult to estimate how many tons of goods in transit the enemy is losing in Laos. Such estimates must depend upon pilot reports of trucks destroyed and damaged, and of secondary fires and explosions. Under the best of conditions bomb damage assessment based on pilot reporting is an extremely unscientific process. In Laos, where the target system is rudimentary, the tonnages being moved are small, the opportunities for dispersion great, and direct observation is obscured by rugged terrain and jungle canopy, any estimate of the volume of supplies being destroyed is especially tenuous.

The most reasonable way to estimate enemy supply losses in Laos is to multiply each truck loss to air strikes by 1.5 tons, on the assumption that half of the destroyed trucks were delivering supplies fully loaded, and the other half were returning empty. The average carrying capacity of the type of truck operating in Laos is 3.0 tons. Applications of this methodology to the 1968 campaign in Laos indicates that about 20 tons of supplies were destroyed daily, the equivalent of about 12 percent of the estimated 165 tons of supplies that entered Laos daily during the same month.*

* *This estimate assumes that an average of about 100 trucks were destroyed weekly in 1968. Pilot reports of trucks destroyed and damaged were deflated on the basis of an agreed CIA/DIA formula*

*(continued)*

The above estimate makes no allowance for supplies destroyed in storage in Laos although such losses undoubtedly occur in addition to losses associated with truck destruction. The only available information that would permit an estimate of these supply losses are pilot reports of secondary explosions and fires. It is extremely difficult, however, to choose with any degree of confidence the factor that should be applied to each observed secondary explosion or fire. Under the jungle canopy, an explosion of a 55-gallon gasoline drum is difficult to distinguish from the explosion of three tons of ammunition. Furthermore, it is not known to what extent there is duplication in pilot reports of destroyed trucks that explode or catch fire, and other reports of secondary explosions and fires. Rather than use a methodology based on the evidence of secondary explosions CIA has customarily considered that the enemy's in transit losses amounted to 20 percent of total traffic, compared to our calculated 12 percent. This added margin, in our judgment, is sufficient to account for any supply losses that would not be included in our estimates.

Enemy supply losses at this level are not so great as to put a serious constraint upon enemy operations in South Vietnam. During 1968 an estimated 165 tons of supplies were delivered daily into the Panhandle of Laos. After allowing for the requirements of the forces in Laos and estimated losses, this volume of traffic was more than 2.5 times the enemy requirements for supplies that must enter South Vietnam. A similar level of truck losses and secondary explosions were reported by pilots in Laos during November 1967 - January 1968 yet the enemy apparently moved a quantity of supplies through Laos that was adequate to conduct the Tet offensive.

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*(continued)
*that calculates losses as 75 percent of those trucks that pilots report as having been destroyed and 25 percent of those reported damaged. This deflation allows for some duplication and inaccuracies in pilot reports and recognizes the known ability of the North Vietnamese to repair damaged trucks. Despite this adjustment it is entirely possible that the truck loss estimates are still exaggerated and inflate the estimate of enemy supply losses.*

QUESTION XXVIII

*With regard to the bombing of North Vietnam:*

*a. What evidence was there on the significance of the principal strains imposed on the DRV (e.g., in economic disruption, extra manpower demands, transportation blockages, population morale)?*

The major effects of the bombing of North Vietnam were extensive damage to the transport network, widespread economic disruption, greatly increased manpower requirements, and the problems of maintaining the morale of the people in the face of personal hardships and deprivation. Hanoi was able to cope effectively with each of these strains, so that the air war did not seriously affect the flow of men and supplies to Communist forces in Laos and South Vietnam. Nor did it significantly erode North Vietnam's military defense capability or Hanoi's determination to persist in the war. Material losses resulting from the bombing were, for the most part, offset by increased imports from Communist countries. Damage and destruction by the bombing of military and economic facilities and equipment, together with measurable losses of output, were valued at about $500 million. Economic and military aid during 1965-68 is estimated at over $3 billion.

Despite heavy damage to the transport network throughout the bombing, effective countermeasures kept the system operable. In the northern part of the country, transport into Hanoi and the port of Haiphong was disrupted by the destruction of a number of key bridges. The Hanoi Railroad/Highway (Doumer) Bridge over the Red River remained out of service between December 1967 and July 1968; the Haiphong Railroad/Highway Bridge was out much of

the time between September 1967 and April 1968. Rail traffic on the Lao Cai line to China was restricted by destruction of the bridge at Viet Tri that remained unserviceable from mid-1966 to December 1968. In each of these, as in countless other interdictions, pontoon bridges, ferries, or temporary bridges provided bypasses to the original structures and permitted continued logistic movements. Other measures to counter bomb damage included the prepositioning of materials and the training of local teams to effect repairs quickly; developing of transport schedules to make maximum use of the cover of darkness and of bomb free sanctuary areas; and pressing into service all types of equipment including bicycles and carts.

The bulk of the bombing throughout the air war was carried on in the Panhandle of North Vietnam. Even under the heavy bombing during the time that air attacks were restricted to the area below the 19th Parallel, however, logistic flows into Laos were maintained, as evidenced by the reports of roadwatch teams and by photography. (See question 28b.)

Throughout the bombing campaign, construction of new rail lines and new highways, along with the dual gauging of the Hanoi - Dong Dang line, was continued so that the transport network now has a greater capacity than at any previous time.

Economic disruption, besides that to the transport system, met with varying degrees of response by the Hanoi regime. Repair of damaged electric powerplants was carried out when major reconstruction was not required, and an estimated 20 percent of the country's prebombing capacity was kept operational at the height of the bombing in mid-1967. A large number of diesel electric generators were imported to provide independent power to essential users. Blast walls were constructed around the principal electric powerplants, beginning in early 1968. For the most part, damage to manufacturing facilities was left unrepaired and the reduced domestic output of such items as cement,

chemicals, and clothing was replaced either in whole or in part by imported goods. Efforts to restore the output of important export products that were casualties of the bombing -- pig iron, coal, apatite, and cement -- were not observed until after the bombing north of the 19th Parallel had been halted. The machine building industry was relatively undamaged by the bombing and appears to have been expanded through substantial imports of machinery and equipment over the past three years.

Disruption of agricultural output by the indirect effects of the bombing on distribution and on the management and productivity of labor was offset by greatly increased imports of foodstuffs with little adverse effect on the availability of food. Rice rations, however, were increasingly honored with less palatable substitutes of imported wheat flour, corn, or domestic subsidiary crops.

Extra manpower demands induced by the bombing brought about some tightening of over-all manpower availabilities, but never reached proportions significant enough to limit Hanoi's support of the war. Additional demands for laborers to repair bomb damage, to move goods, and to help in civil defense were estimated to total between 475,000 and 600,000. Of these, less than 200,000 were occupied full time in war-related activities; the remainder were used as conditions warranted. The bombing required an additional 100,000 military personnel within North Vietnam to man the air defenses.

These extraordinary demands were satisfied primarily from the underemployed in agriculture and the services sectors, and by the increased use of women. The agricultural labor force could be reduced substantially without a proportionate decline in output because of the low marginal productivity of each farmer. Similarly, workers in

handicraft industries could be diverted with only slight adverse effects on the economy. Military manpower requirements, that increased each year during the bombing, were satisfied by broadening the draft regulations. The draft age was increased, former servicemen were recalled to service, and physical standards were lowered. As a result, an estimated 600,000 males were added by 1967 to the 800,000 males eligible for military service in 1965.

The bombing imposed severe hardships on the people by the constant threat to life, by the disruption of personal routines, and by the dispersal of industry and evacuation from urban areas. There were some indications in late 1967 and in 1968 that morale was wavering, but not to a degree that influenced the regime's policies on the war. The regime was quite successful, however, in using the bombing threat as an instrument to mobilize people behind the Communist war effort. There is substantial evidence, for instance, that the general populace found the hardships of the war more tolerable when it faced daily dangers from the bombing than when this threat was removed and many of the same hardships persisted. Concern about maintaining popular morale, and, in particular, discipline and unwavering support for the needs of the war appears to have grown markedly in the past year when most of the country was no longer subjected to bombing. Since the 1 November bombing halt over the entire country, Hanoi has put great stress on countering the widespread tendency of the people to relax their efforts. Concern of this kind is reflected almost daily in North Vietnamese publications and broadcasts as the regime has used exhortation, criticism, and the threat of coercion to sustain support for the needs of the war in South Vietnam.

*b. What was the level of logistical throughput through the southern provinces of NVN just prior to the November bombing halt? To what extent did this level reflect the results of the US bombing campaign?*

An average of about 1,000 short tons per day moved south of Thanh Hoa into the southern provinces of North Vietnam during the period April through October 1968. About one third of the total flow was economic goods; the remainder, military and war-related goods such as petroleum. About 75 percent of the supplies moved into the Panhandle of North Vietnam were used locally (AAA ammunition comprised a major portion of the total), 15 percent were moved into the Panhandle of Laos for use there or in South Vietnam, 5 percent moved to the DMZ, and 5 percent moved into northern Laos.

The North Vietnamese have continually increased the volume of supplies moving into the southern provinces. The total daily volume moved south during the seven-month period before the bombing halt in October was 15 percent higher than that moved in 1967. The volume moved southward in 1967 was more than double that of 1965. The throughput tonnage to southern Laos increased substantially in 1968 compared with 1967 as shown below:

| | Average Number per Day | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | April thru October | |
| | 1967 | 1968 | 1967 | 1968 |
| Tons delivered to southern Laos | 95 | 165 | 70 | 145 |

The increase in the volume of supplies moved into the Panhandle of North Vietnam and Laos in 1968 consisted almost exclusively of military and war-related goods. It resulted from the step-up in personnel infiltration, the higher levels of combat in South Vietnam, and the increased supplies and equipment needed to maintain through logistic movements in the face of increased air interdiction against lines of communication (LOCs).

During April-October 1968 an average of about 95 tons per day were destroyed as a consequence of air attacks, or roughly 10 percent of the total flow into the southern provinces. In addition to direct losses the bombing complicated the flow of supplies to Laos and South Vietnam. We are convinced, however, that the bombing did not put a relevant ceiling on the volume of supplies that the enemy could move South. The enemy was able to take effective countermeasures that resulted in the maintenance and even an increase in the flow of traffic. During the final months of the air war, traffic movements in the Panhandle of North Vietnam were influenced as much by the weather and logistic needs as they were by the intensity of the air strikes.

One reason why the air interdiction campaign was not more successful is the fact that the capacity of the transportation routes remained well above the requirements for their use. Another reason is that even though large amounts of transportation equipment were destroyed and damaged by air attacks, the North Vietnamese were able to repair and replace motor trucks, watercraft and railroad rolling stock so that no shortages developed.

The estimates of traffic flows into the southern provinces of North Vietnam are based on both indirect and direct evidence, supported by a limited amount of documentary evidence. The

estimate for 1965 was based, in part, on a sample of actual traffic and has been increased over time by such indicators of activity as changes in the military order of battle, pilot sightings, aerial photography, the level of imports, and roadwatch reporting. The data, therefore, are subject to a margin of error, but are of the proper order of magnitude and could have as great a downward bias as an upward one.

The estimate on supplies lost through air strikes contains an unknown amount of redundancy, and is probably too high. It is based on reports by pilots of the number of fires and secondary explosions, and of the amount of transport equipment destroyed and damaged.

The most authoritative part of the throughput estimate is the amount of supplies delivered to southern Laos which is based on reports from roadwatch teams, particularly those on Route 15/12 to the Mu Gia Pass. The tonnage moved to southern Laos via this route is an estimate based on these reports and is considered to be a minimum estimate. Roadwatch reports for Route 15 also serve as a basis for estimating traffic on the other principal access road (Route 137/912) which has not had good coverage by roadwatch teams. Other intelligence confirms that our estimates of the traffic moving on Route 137/912 were essentially accurate. We believe that the data compiled through careful research and analysis over many years are adequate to support our estimates and that objective alternative interpretations of the data would be difficult.

*c. To what extent did Chinese and Soviet aid relieve pressure on Hanoi?*

Communist military and economic aid to North Vietnam to a large extent offset the physical destruction and the disruptive effects of the US bombing and were instrumental in maintaining the morale of the people. Communist countries provided all of the weapons; enough food, consumer goods and materials to compensate for lost domestic output; and most of the equipment and materials to maintain the transport system. Without Communist aid, most of it from the Soviet Union and China -- particularly given the pressures generated by the bombing -- the Vietnamese Communists would have been unable to sustain the war in both South and North Vietnam on anything like the levels actually engaged in during the past three years.

The amount of Communist economic aid delivered annually has grown from a yearly average of less than $100 million through 1964, to $150 million in 1965, $275 million in 1966, $370 million in 1967, and $460 million in 1968. The value of Communist military aid increased from an average of less than $15 million a year during 1954-64, to $270 million in 1965, $455 million in 1966, and $650 million in 1967. With the restricted bombing of the heavily defended northern part of the country in 1968, military aid deliveries were reduced. At least 75 percent of total military aid since 1965 has been for air defense.

North Vietnam's air defenses significantly reduced the effectiveness of the US bombing, resulted directly or indirectly in the loss of almost 1,100 US aircraft, and provided a psychological boost to morale. Before 1965, the Soviet Union had provided North Vietnam with only ground

forces equipment, transport and trainer aircraft, and small naval patrol craft, while China had provided MIG 15/17 jet fighters, motor gunboats, and ground forces equipment. Since early 1965, the USSR has provided North Vietnam with most of its air defense systems including surface-to-air missiles, jet fighters, a radar network, and antiaircraft artillery. Chinese military aid since 1965, much smaller than that from the USSR, has been important primarily in building up North Vietnam's ground forces, including re-equipping Communist ground forces in South Vietnam with the AK-47 assault rifle, the 107-mm rocket, and other new weapons.

The bombing had been indirectly responsible for part of North Vietnam's reduced agricultural output since 1965 because of diversions of labor and disruptions to the distribution system. Greatly increased imports of foodstuffs in 1967 and 1968 have prevented any serious widespread food shortages. The food supplied by Communist countries during 1968 probably provided at least a sixth of the total calories consumed by the North Vietnamese. A comparison of estimated shortfalls in rice production and of imports of foodstuffs is shown below:

| | Thousand Metric Tons | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
| Shortfalls (in rice equivalents) | 0 | 200 | 350 | 500 |
| Imports | 120 | 80 | 460 | 790 |

Estimates of the shortfalls are tenuous and the extent of the increase in output of subsidiary foods cannot be measured. Moreover, the annual

population increment adds almost 70,000 tons to the country's annual food requirements.

Without Communist assistance in maintaining the logistics network, North Vietnam's capacity to move supplies southward in support of the war in South Vietnam would have been seriously restricted. To offset the considerable damage to the transport system, the Soviet Union and China provided large quantities of construction machinery and materials, trucks, railroad rolling stock, and watercraft. At no time during the bombing was there close to a critical shortage of transport equipment in North Vietnam. In addition, China supplied North Vietnam with about 50,000 engineering and support troops to build, repair, and defend transport facilities in the northern part of the country.

North Vietnam's small modern industry was destroyed or rendered largely inoperative as a result of bomb damage. All the major Communist countries, however, especially the Soviet Union, have supplied North Vietnam with a vast array of industrial machinery, metal products, vehicles, and chemicals that in total value are several times greater than the value of lost domestic industrial output.

*d. What are current views on proportion of war-essential imports that could come into NVN over the rail or road lines from China, even if all imports by sea were denied and a strong effort even made to interdict ground transport? What is the evidence?*

All of the war-essential imports could be brought into North Vietnam over rail lines or roads from China in the event that imports by sea were successfully denied. The disruption to

imports, if seaborne imports were cut off, would be widespread but temporary. Within two or three months North Vietnam and its allies would be able to implement alternative procedures for maintaining the flow of essential ecooomic and military imports. The uninterrupted capacities of the railroad, highway, and river connections with China are about 16,000 tons per day, more than two and a half times the 6,300 tons per day of total imports overland and by sea in 1968, when the volume reached an all-time high. Experience in North Vietnam has shown that an intensive effort to interdict ground transport routes by air attack alone can be successful for only brief periods because of the redundancy of transport routes, elaborate and effective countermeasures, and unfavorable flying weather.

Almost four years of air war in North Vietnam have shown -- as did the Korean War -- that, although air strikes will destroy transport facilities, equipment, and supplies, they cannot successfully interdict the flow of supplies because much of the damage can frequently be repaired within hours. Two principal rail lines connect Hanoi with Communist China, with a combined capacity of over 9,000 tons a day. Eight primary highway routes cross the China border, having a combined capacity of about 5,000 tons per day. In addition, the Red River flows out of China and has a capacity averaging 1,500 tons per day.

An intensive and sustained air interdiction program could have a good chance of reducing the northern rail capacity by at least half. However, roads are less vulnerable to interdiction, and waterways even less so. In the June-August 1967 air attacks -- a previous high point of US interdiction efforts against targets in the northern part of North Vietnam -- the

transport system was able to function effectively.* Strikes in August 1967 against the Hanoi - Dong Dang rail line were effective in stopping through service for a total of only ten days. Strikes during this period against the highways that parallel the Dong Dang line showed no insignificant or sustained reduction of capacity. The Hanoi - Lao Cai rail line capacity, after destruction of the Viet Tri bridge, was maintained at 700 tons per day by use of a rail ferry. If more capacity had been required, however, there is every reason to believe that additional facilities would have been installed at this location to restore the through capacity of the line.

In addition to the overland capacity, an airlift from Chinese airfields could potentially provide a means for importing a large volume of high-priority goods. Moreover, total interdiction of seaborne imports would be difficult because shallow-draft lighters could be used to unload cargo from oceangoing ships anchored in waters outside the mined major harbor areas. Large numbers of small coastal ships and junks could move cargoes from ships diverted to southern Chinese ports of Fort Bayard, Canton,

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* *Interdiction of the lines of communication between Hanoi and the China border could not be sustained at the level that was achieved in the southern Panhandle of North Vietnam during August through October 1968 for a number of reasons. The multiplicity of modes and transport routes in the North would make it necessary to sustain interdiction at a larger number of points than in the Panhandle. Air defenses in the North -- aircraft, missiles, and antiaircraft artillery -- make air attacks less accurate and also more costly in terms of US air losses. We believe it is unlikely that either B-52s or Sea Dragon forces could be brought to bear in an interdiction campaign in the north.*

or Peihai, and could unload imports over the beaches, or move into North Vietnam's network of inland waterways.

The volume of imports that would be essential to maintain the war cannot be closely estimated. Out of total imports in 1968, less than five percent were military materiel and ammunition. Other imports essential to the war would include petroleum, food, clothing, transport equipment, and construction materials to maintain the lines of communication. In 1968, the volume of all overland and seaborne imports included the following:

| | Thousand Metric Tons |
|---|---|
| Total | 2,300 |
| Military materiel | 100 |
| Foodstuffs | 790 |
| Petroleum | 400 |
| Fertilizer | 155 |
| Miscellaneous | 860 |

Within the miscellaneous category was an undetermined amount of goods to maintain the economy, to build factories, and to satisfy, at least in part, civilian needs. Moreover, the level of import of some goods was believed to be more than current consumption, permitting a buildup of reserves. It is possible, therefore, that war-essential imports might be as much as one fourth less than the total, or 4,700 tons per day. Whether war-essential imports are estimated to be 4,700 or 6,300 tons per day, however, the

overland import capacity would be from two to three times the required import level, and it is unlikely that air interdiction could reduce transport capacities enough over an extended period to significantly constrict import levels.

e. *What action has the DRV taken to reduce vulnerability and importance of Hanoi as a population and economic center (e.g. through population evacuation and dispersal)?*

During 1965-68, Hanoi's vulnerability has been reduced somewhat by evacuation of the non-essential population and by dispersal of small industries. Despite these measures, however, Hanoi's economic importance has been largely preserved. The city's air defense is manned by experienced crews and probably has been enhanced during 1968 by the installation of new radar equipment. Construction of additional bomb shelters and maintenance of the older shelters apparently continues. Reports indicate a steady return of evacuees to Hanoi since mid-1968, but these probably could be evacuated again on short notice. On balance, the city's defensive posture appears to have improved gradually since the bombing limitation of 31 March 1968.

Evacuation of the population from Hanoi reportedly involved 300,000 people, more than one half the population of the city proper, of which 170,000 were students and children. Although few specific details are available, the second largest group evacuated probably was handicraft workers, followed by non-essential and old people, government workers, and the labor force of a few factories. Most of these people are believed to have been moved to the rural areas just a few miles outside the city, still largely within the boundaries of the Hanoi metropolitan area. Their proximity to the city is attested to by frequent

reports of a large influx of people on weekends. Even though the evacuation produced some hardships -- crowded living conditions, separation of families, longer commuting distances -- the welfare of the population generally was adequately served. Currently, a growing number of evacuated people are reported to be returning to Hanoi, but the regime has warned that conditions are still not safe. Although primary and secondary schools and universities have not been officially relocated to urban areas, some outdoor classes were observed in late 1968 in Hanoi. There were reports in December that some kindergarten and nursery schools would be reopening soon in the Hanoi area. Hospitals and most government agencies officially continue to operate from dispersed sites.

Industrial dispersal primarily involved small enterprises and short-distance relocation within the Hanoi metropolitan area. It apparently has been accomplished without long-term effects on Hanoi's economy. Dispersal of large industrial installations was limited to a few factories that could be broken up into small producing units. For example, parts of the 8th March Textile Plant and the Hanoi Machine Building Plant were dispersed, but certain shops at the original plants remained active throughout the bombing. On the other hand, in the handicraft sector, which supplied about half the total industrial output in Hanoi prior to the bombing, it appears that hundreds of handicraft shops were relocated, probably to the suburbs surrounding the city. Little disruption of output would result from dispersal of these small-scale, labor-intensive enterprises, compared to the inefficiency inherent in dispersing large installations. Furthermore, as handicrafts typically employ more than 65 percent of the industrial labor force in North Vietnam, the dispersal would be an effective means of

evacuating a substantial segment of the population from the city with minimal disruption to the economy.

Hanoi is the land transportation hub to the southern part of the country. Rail connections with the port of Haiphong and with Communist China, as well as the most important highways, converge on Hanoi. Therefore, most of the imports destined for the south pass through Hanoi. When the main bridges into Hanoi were destroyed under the Rolling Thunder campaign, the North Vietnamese built rail and highway bypasses around the city. The original bridges now have been repaired but the ferry or pontoon bypasses are being kept in readiness for emergencies.

Hanoi continued to bolster its defense against air attacks even after the 31 March 1968 bombing limitation. Some 34 million individual shelters have been constructed throughout the country, and the Hanoi area claims an average availability of 3 shelters per person that can be reached in seconds after a warning is sounded. A number of bunker-type shelters were observed under construction in the spring of 1968, and limited construction of these was continuing as recently as December. The population is experienced in first-aid, techniques of designing home shelters, and regularly cleaning and repairing older shelters. The air defense capability probably has been upgraded by the installation of 10 modified Fan Song radars in the surface-to-air missile network around Hanoi in 1968. Revetments to protect a small number of critical installations have been observed, and massive blast walls were erected around the Hanoi Thermal Powerplant and the Hanoi Post, Telephone and Telegraph building to protect against all but direct hits.

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